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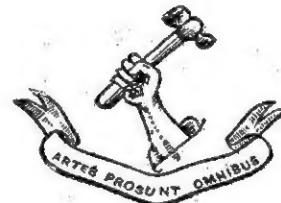
# VISVAKARMA AND HIS DESCENDANTS

BY  
**ALFRED EDWARD ROBERTS**

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&c., &c., &c.*



Báhu sachchancha sippancha  
Vinayōcha susikkhitō,  
Subhásitācha yávācha  
Etam mangala muttaman.

*Maha Mangala Sutta.*

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P R E F A C E

No race of human beings, known to history, is more broadly divided, or more widely disunited, amongst themselves, than the Sinhalese people.

The proximate cause of this disunion, so full of peril to their prosperity and advancement, lies not in their religious differences, not in their political animosities, but in their false and meaningless distinctions of caste. So ramified is this evil, so widespread is this bane, that its disastrous influence has invaded even the judicial seats of the Island, and poisoned the fountains of justice. Nay, it has gone further. It has penetrated into the sacred cloister even of the spiritual preceptor himself, and has made religion itself subservient to this social curse.

To say nothing of the teachers of other religions, this indeed is the case with some of the Buddhist Priests of Ceylon. When their Great Lord and Master, the Buddha, perceiving the disastrous consequences, resulting from the observance of the hurtful distinctions of caste, devoted a lifetime to the eradication of this civic peril, by precept and example, some of his disciples, whether they belong to the Siamese, or Ramanna, or Amarapura sects have been, be it said to their eternal disgrace, most instrumental in keeping this baneful institution alive. If the priest is so, need we mention aught of the layman?

Of all the castes of Ceylon, the most militant are the Vellalas. Pretending to possess a superiority in descent, a superiority to which they have not the faintest semblance of a right, or the variest shadow of a title, they have written and published books replete with offence to the sensibilities, fraught with danger to the interests of the other castes of the Island. The natural consequence of all this is that some of the other castes, roused from their apathy and indifference, to a full sense of their peril, have addressed themselves to the vindication of their own status, and to the examination of their revilers, whose idle babble concerning their own castes, and foolish prattle concerning

those of others, are but the simple outcome of hopeless, esiccated ignorance, and insufferable conceit.

One of the castes, thus reviled, is the VISVA BRAHMA CASTE. No class of people that inhabit this spicy Island of ours, is more pacific, more contented and more loyal to the British throne than the people of this caste. Being absolutely satisfied with their lot and well acquainted with the loftiness of their own origin, they treated the insults and insinuations of their enemies with the contempt they deserved, but perceiving that the more they were passive, the greater grew the virulence of the attacks of their revilers, and conceiving also that a long practice of not questioning the supposed truth of an assertion, gives it a semblance, a superficial appearance of being right, and apprehensive further that a continuous systematic silence might be construed to mean assent to propositions the most absurd, to statements the most ridiculous, and to allegations the most unfounded, and that these malignant aspersions false though they are, might, if left unchallenged, imperil their social status, and embarrass their advancement, they for once became exceedingly alive to a sense of their peril. This common danger, which threatened disaster to their common rights, engendered amongst their ranks, a cohesion, hitherto unknown. It is this union thus created, that became responsible for the publication of the small brochure, in the country's vernacular called "The Visva Brahma Wansa Vinischaya," which in English means, "an inquiry into the Visvakarma Caste." That book, in plain simple language has described the origin of the caste of the Visvakarman, without introducing into it matters of a polemical complexion. It had a very marked effect on the thinking portion of our countrymen, and stifled the flow of much vituperative literature on the part of some other castes whose congenial practice has been to vilify the Visvakarmans.

There was, however, this drawback, namely, that the book, being in Sinhalese, could not disseminate the facts it contains, amongst those, who are accustomed to interchange sentiments, through the medium of the English language only. To supply that want this little book is written.

Its object is two-fold. The first is to state at some length the origin, rise and fall of the VISVA BRAHMA CASTE, and to refute and repel the Pelion on Ossa of false and undeserved aspersions which the venom of the detractors of the VISVA BRAHMA CASTE has heaped upon it, without measure. This circumstance has made it somewhat difficult for the book to have resisted the temptation of now and then digressing into the administration of a chastisement here, a castigation there, as the occasion demanded. Such reproof very often bears fruit. The art of the Silpi and the pursuit of the Govi are collated and compared here.

There is further to be found in its pages a vast amount of social, political, historical and religious matters of great importance. It has devoted a few pages to a description of the origin of man, a subject, fraught with great fascination for the intelligent mind and a few more to the narration of the rise and progress of the Goigama people of Ceylon.

While introducing into its pages a variety of such topics, somewhat calculated to provoke controversy, it has not lost sight of its main object, or relinquished its steadfast purpose of vindicating the VISVA BRAHMA CASTE from the malignant disparagements of wicked and unprincipled men.

The most delicate part of the book is that which treats of the origin and status of the Visva Brahmins. The praising and extolling of a caste, on however fair grounds, by a scion of that very caste may perhaps appear to be gasconading puff, but his mind is relieved by the fact that the panegyric is not based upon mere vague unfounded assertion, but upon broad and solid incontrovertible truths. The book has not as far as that matter is concerned, advanced an inch of ground without the citation of authorities for its support, and the fame, lustre and renown of the testimony adduced give the VISVA BRAHMA CASTE a position and a status, the most noble and exalted in the world.

Its covert and final aim is to impress upon the minds of our countrymen the folly and danger of observing the distinctions of caste and the evil arising from it to the nation, and thereby to strike, at the institution itself a crushing and lasting blow. It is a prodigious task, but if the advance-

ment of the people of Ceylon, and their well-being are objects worth attaining, then, indeed, the task must be accomplished at whatever cost, and until it is accomplished, until the various castes of the land are welded into one cohesive and comprehensive whole, their social union and national regeneration must be looked upon as a chimera, a day dream, a Canterbury tale.

ALFRED E. ROBERTS.

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE.

Alfred Edward Roberts, Ratnajinendra Rabel Rathawira brought out, under the auspices of Ceylon Vishwakarma Union the treatise "Vishwakarma and His Descendants" in 1909. This treatise was published from Colombo which was and still is outside the Copyright Union under the Copenhagen convention of Copyrights. It was printed at the Ceylon Observer Press. This treatise is the only authoritative work on the subject, which the title of the book indicates. Because Ceylon is outside Copyright Union, the rights were not reserved.

It is unfortunate that no reprint of the book has been published, although Vernacular translations have been brought out in India.

This book is an erudite research into the origin, evolution through ages and the present enforced degradation of the Vishwakarma Community. Principally it deals with the condition of that important community, in Southern India and Ceylon but it has an All India Appeal. The author has established beyond cavil and beyond all controversy, the Brahmanic origin of the Vishwakarma caste. The evidence adduced and the authorities cited by the writer defy all challenge.

All India Vishwakarma Brahman Mahasabha entrusted its President to bring out a reprint of the original work, establishing the pristine glory of the Vishwakarma caste. As President of that organisation the publisher undertook that task. Unfortunately the difficulty of obtaining paper during the war has delayed its publication, for which the publisher tenders his apology to the Community. Great care has been taken to make the reprint as accurate as possible. It is now with the greatest pleasure that the publisher presents the reprint to the members of the community.

The book is issued for the benefit of the Community with the object of uniting the different sections and sub-sections of that Community and not for profit.

My best thanks are due to Pandit Jai Krishna Sharma Jee of Delhi, for lending me the very rare copy of the book without which this reprint could not have been brought out.

MEHAR CHAND DHIMAN,  
President, All-India Vishwakarma  
Brahman Mahasabha.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE ARYAN FAMILY OF MAN.

**M**AN, the crowning work of evolution, is simply an animal by nature. Inheriting the different and various characteristics he shares in common with the zoophyte and the fish, with the reptile and the mammal, he in bone and muscle, in digestion and nutrition, acknowledges his affinity to these his brothers, the common progeny of a common mother, the Earth. The different stages of development of the human embryo, from its conception in the maternal womb, to its final expulsion from that gloomy abode, place this fact of science above the domain of doubt. Commencing at the root of evolution, it passes through all the grades of organic life, from the lowest to the highest, from the primordial gelatinous mass of unmoulded matter at the bottom to the intellectual man at the top.

At what time of the existence of this earth did man first arise? At what spot on this terrestrial globe did he first appear? These are questions fraught with profound and fascinating interest to intelligent minds. They have become the prolific source of endless research, but no scientific man has yet succeeded in giving them a satisfactory answer. From Thales to Lucretius, from Buffon to Lyell, from Lamark to Charles Darwin, all have declared themselves baffled. If these pioneers of science have failed, is it likely that others will appear to raise this thick veil of darkness which screens the face of nature from human ken? The sum of scientific research has not advanced beyond the barren conjecture, that man originated probably near the equator in Central Asia, but whatever may be the spot in which he first appeared on this earth, be it Europe, Asia, Africa, or America, one fact is placed beyond controversy, namely, that the primitive man was a degraded savage.

When we trace history back to the night of tradition,

we find all the early nations to have been barbarians. The further we recede into the dim past, and reach hoary antiquity, the lower does man sink in the scale of civilisation, until at last the transition from brute to man disappears and man is lost in the brute.

Perceiving some peculiar features, constant in the Caucasian foetus, but absent in the Caucasian adult, and struck with the remarkable approach which man makes to the simian family, Lamark wrought from them the startling deduction that man originated from the orang. What was at best a vague hypothesis at first, grew into a theory at the hands of Darwin, and has now assumed the stern aspect of a fact of science, with the force of an axiom in geometry.

It cannot, however, be positively asserted that all the known races of mankind originated from two common ancestors. Such a theory is rudely repelled by the known facts of science. The harmony that exists between the general features of the physical frame of each man of the great types of the human family, the Mongolian, the Caucasian and the Negro, gives no authority to the assertion that they all sprang out of one common stock. The limbs common to the human frame are doubtless constant in every case, but the divergence that exists in other respects is so distinctly marked that it at once precludes all possibility of a common source. Why do we recount these facts? Why? but to show the degraded origin of man, who is now inflated with the empty pride of caste, based upon a supposed high origin which does not exist.

There is the other question, at what period in the formation of the outer crust of this earth, did the various races of human family emanate? Science acknowledges its inability even here to afford a satisfactory answer. Geological testimony, derived from fossil remains, traces this evolution back to a period, compared with the immensity of which, the duration of authentic history is but a transient moment. Whatever may be the remoteness of the age of man's first appearance on this earth, mankind, when they first came to

have a place in the chronicles of history, were dwellers in the high regions of Central Asia. These people, who in a later period in history, came to be styled Aryans, a name derived from the Sanskrit root "Ar," to put or fit two things together, and who afterwards settled down in Aryavarta, were, as will hereafter appear, no others than the descendants of Visvakarma the progenitor of the Viva Brahma or the Visvakarma caste.

No man has yet succeeded in discovering the original abode of the primitive stock even of the Aryan family of man. Max Muller's theory that the Vale of Iran in Persia is the original abode of that great family, has been severely assailed by those who have most ably advanced the claims of Europe to that honour. All that the European research has traced and discovered is that the original orang that conceived the Aryan foetus in its womb was an inhabitant of the Torrid Zone of Central Asia.

For how many centuries the primitive Aryans dwelt in this original abode of theirs, after their first entrance into this habitable globe, it is past all calculation. That countless ages lapsed from the genesis of our first Aryan forefather, to the final exodus of his children from their native home, is doubtless. That they were much civilised at the time of their dispersion is equally certain. What dreadful catastrophe, what dire resistless cause coerced them to leave their sweet home, in the plateau of Central Asia, and migrate into unknown countries and climes in quest of new habitations we do not know, we cannot say. Perhaps the dreadful cause is to be found in some terrific convulsion of which nothing definite is known to history.

This destruction of their abode, and their dispersion from their home, are supposed to have taken place fifteen centuries before the Christian Era. This is pure conjecture. The event is of breathless antiquity, and no period tolerably certain can be assigned to the dreadful event. The dispersion seems to have every sign of being the dreadful result of an unexpected catastrophe, the terrible outcome of an unlooked-for upheaval, taking the people by surprise,

and causing them to seek safety in precipitate flight.

At the time of this convulsion they had attained some fair share of civilisation. One wave of these flying immigrants penetrated the western countries, and settled in Hellas or Greece in Europe. It was Greece that felt the first impulse of European civilisation. In its westward march this electric shock fulminated over Rome, Spain and France, but no country in the world has this galvanic throb pulsated and animated to greater eminence than that land of freedom, England, the envy of the world.

"Just as that branch of our forefathers who were afterwards called Hellenes," says Dr. Pulney Andy of Madras, "attained in architecture and statuary a pitch of excellence, that in exquisite perfection of artistic beauty and taste, has never yet been equalled, so did this branch of our ancestors that entered India gain an equal celebrity for their architecture and statuary, although different in style and character." Rajendra Lal Mitra in his celebrated book called the "Indo-Aryan" says, "That the Aryans, who came over to India, had the same intellectual capacity as their Greek cousins. And it remains to be seen how far they utilised it in the country of their adoption; but that long before the times of the Great Asoka, the Indo-Aryans had known the art of building with stone, is incontrovertibly established by the most exquisitely chased and eloquently engraved stone pillars of that powerful and magnificent potentate."

The art of Europe had always for its object the production of exquisite beauty and the exhibition of refined taste. The Venus De Medicis, the Aphrodites of Praxiteles, and the Venus of Milo are instances.\*

\*The Aphrodites of Praxiteles was the most renowned statue of antiquity. It was purchased by the ancient Cnicians from the great sculptor. That nation refused to part with this marvellous production of art, although Nicomedes King of Bythinia offered to pay off their national debt as a price for it. The statue was subsequently removed to Constantinople, where it perished in the great fire during the reign of Justinian (A. D. 80) a sad end indeed to so price-

The art of Asia, on the other hand, rushed to the opposite extreme of physical deformity and hideousness. Such as Juggernaut, Vishnu, Ganapathi and other frightful deities of the Hindoo Pantheon. The immoderate expenditure of intellectual effort in the production of graceless, forbidding and monstrous Aesops and toads, had the disastrous effect of engendering an obliquity of the sculptor's sense and vision of the beautiful. So much, indeed, was this the case, that his utmost effort to communicate grace and beauty even to the frames of the most sacred objects of worship and adoration, ended in signal failure and defeat.

Look at the image of Buddha, in the temples of the Buddhists, preserved as an "Uddesika," vicarious relic of veneration. The frightful disproportions that exist, in the different members, of the frame are an insult to the meek, moral and intellectual sage of Kapilavastu. The weak shapeless head, the dull stupid brow, the sharp cruel nose, the red lascivious lips, the large prominent eyes, all these are more the gross undeveloped features of a lewd lachorous satyr, than those of that holy man, the most loving, the most serene, the most subdued, Lord Buddha.

"In earth and heavens and hells incomparable  
"All honoured, wisest, best, most pitiful  
"The teacher of Nirvana and the law."--(Light of Asia)

less an article! This statue was fashioned after the lovely frame of Phryne, the Greek Wanton, the most exquisitely handsome woman known to history. She was prosecuted by the Athenian government for her debaucheries. Hyperides, the orator, appeared to defend her. When the judges sat to try her, Hyperides offered one and one defence only. He stripped her naked up to the waist and cried out RESIST IF YOU CAN. The amazing loveliness that greeted the sight of the judges was so captivating that they forthwith acquitted her. The young sparks of Athens afterwards erected in her honour a statue of pure gold, at an immense cost, an honour which no other being has ever succeeded in winning. How beauty, even when encased in moral turpitude challenges homage!

The Japanese Buddha is a typical Japanese, the Chinese Buddha preserves the features of the race, the Burmese Buddha a veritable Mongol, and the Siamese Buddha a graceless specimen of the Yellow race. They indeed are consistent enough. They are true to their race; but the Sinhalese Buddha is a hideous Dravidian, an importation perhaps of the low Hindoo society of the decadence of Ceylon. Xenophanes said somewhere that if lions and horses believed in an almighty being, and had the ability to make unto themselves a graven image of that god, they would each fashion to himself a lion and a horse respectively. How appropriate is the remark! If the Buddhists wish to have a material image to preserve the memory of their great Lord, let them at least have one which would make some fair approach to the comely features of the holy man, reputed to have possessed some personal charm and attraction. As it is the image is a living disgrace both to that peerless sage and his devoted followers.

Leaving the European scientists to shift for themselves, let us see what the Hindoos say with regard to the home of our Aryan ancestors. The Sanskrit literature bequeathed to us by our forefathers points to the "Mahameru" as the original abode of the Aryan race of mankind; but so signal a failure that has attended the efforts of learned men to discover the geographical position of this "great rock" which is the radical meaning of the word, that its very existence has been imperilled by a growing tendency to view it as a myth, a chimera, a poetic fiction, a prodigious creation of the Hindoo imagination. Everything that has gigantic proportions is compared to the Mahameru. The more modern explanation of it is that it is nothing else than our earth. This is a very plausible hypothesis. It clears away much of the difficulty otherwise calculated to defy and baffle the understanding.

It was on this Mahameru that Twashtar Prajapati, who as one of the ancestors of the Visvakarma caste is said to have built his city of light "Tejovartipura." In its neigh-

bourhood were "Sweta Bhumi" and "Sweta Dwipa." What these were or where they were no mortal man can now say.\*

The early Aryan immigrants were first found settled on Kashmir's soil. The name Kashmir is a contraction of the Sanskrit words "Prakasa Timira," meaning dispulsion of darkness; that is to say in other words that Twashtar Prajapati, of whom we shall have much to say hereafter, came from the city of Light, to dispel the darkness of Kashmir. Do not these words admit of a cryptic signification? Is not this the first dawn of Indian civilisation? The information called from other sources and reproduced in these pages will afford much proof of the truth of this conjecture.

## CHAPTER II.

### VISVAKARMA.

The original progenitor of the Visvakarma Caste, a caste which is now known as Kammalar, Kamsala, Panchala, Tarachcha, Aehari, Visva Brahma, Dewa Kammalar and Navandanno, was Visvakarma, the Heros Eponymos of the Visvakarma race. He was the son of Bhū or Bhuvana meaning the earth, an origin which justifies the supposition that he was a deified hero. He is regarded as the great architect of the universe. He occupies the position of an almighty god. Jehovah as he appeared to John in the Isle of Patmos,

\*Professor Wilson says that a party of four Sivite Brahmins named "Sweta," white, "Swetaswa," white horsed, "Sweta Sikha," white haired, and "Sweta Lohita," white blooded, is supposed to have visited "Sweta Dwipa," white island.

Professor Weber takes "white island" to be a colony of Syrian Christians where those Brahmins saw white men worshipping Jehovah, and by them the legend of Christ was communicated to the Hindoos, who incorporated it into their own religion. This is pure conjecture, with absurdity depicted on its face.

had hair as white as snow, eyes as two burning flames and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword. (Revelation 1-16.) He is a jealous god visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generations, and that stern portrait suits that austere character. Visvakarmaya on the other hand has more poetry in his frame. It is the creation of an imagination perfectly balanced and intensely poetical. He is endowed with five heads each wearing a crown, not a fixed triple like that of the Pontifex Maximus, of the holy Roman See, the most recent contest for which brought success to the lowly Sarto and defeat and discomfiture to the ambitious Rampolla, but a quintuple or even a sextuple just as it suited the deified man's fancy to wear. His five faces were differently named as Satyojātaya, Vāmadēwaya, Aghōraya, Tatpurushaya and Esānaya, and from each of these he begot a son; from Satyojātaya, Manu; from Vāmadēwaya, Maya; from Aghōraya, Twashtar; from Tatpurushaya, Silpi; and from Esānaya, Visvagna; known also Sanaka, Sanātana, Pratānāsa, Abhuwanāsa, and Suparnāsa Rishis, respectively. There must indeed be some mystic abstruse symbolic meaning here. A being with five faces is quite a phenomenon to those whose organs of vision are familiar to the sight of beings with one face only. This circumstance becomes doubly strange when it is known further that the lips of each of these faces gave birth to a son. This can be accounted for on the score of imagination only. Boundless is the power of that faculty of the human mind. The Roman Janus was two-faced; Kandaswamy of Kataragam was six-faced and dozen-handed; Briarios of the Greeks was *hecaton cheira*, hundred-handed. In the first Rik of the Purusha Sukta, god is represented as "Sahasraksha" thousand-eyed. These creations are simply emblematical, each attribute connected by a sign. Keenness of sight is expressed by a plurality of eyes, dexterity by a multitude of hands. It is the manifestation of an idea in a concrete and tangible form. The process of reproduction of the human species has been known to man since Adam and Eve tasted of the forbidden fruit. To say then that the five sons of Visvakarmaya sprang from his five faces sounds absolutely paradoxical. Such a par-

turbation is contrary to all the stern facts known to the science of Sexual Physiology. It was a habit of the ancient human mind to indulge in symbolical language. Intense imagination was its most prominent feature, and it was quite an act of the imagination that endowed Visvakarmaya with five faces. This being of antiquity Visvakarmaya was held in the highest veneration. The Rig Veda is eloquent in his praise. He is therein described as the almighty and all-seeing Creator. True it is that the Puranas and the Mahabharata speak disparagingly of him, but these books in point of importance are far inferior to the Vedas, and they are moreover the productions of the ancestors of the modern Go-Brahmins, the hereditary enemies of the descendants of Visvakarmaya, a circumstance which at once explains the reason of such detractions. He was of the Soorya Wansa or the Solar race. It is the highest of all the Wansas, and all members of the Visvakarma Caste descended as they are from him must of necessity be members of that exalted Wansa. Of this more hereafter. We will dilate a little upon the position of Visvakarmaya and the veneration he was held in by the ancients.

While the Hebrew writers assign to Jehovah the origin of the world, one section at least of the Hindoo Philosophers has given to Visvakarmaya that exalted position.

"Nabhūmi najalan chaiva  
 "Nātēji nacha vāya vahh  
 "Nachākāsa nachittāncha  
 "Nabuddhyā ghrāna göcharahh  
 "Nacha Brahma na Visnuscha  
 "Nacha Rudrascha Tārakahh  
 "Sarva soonya nirālambahh  
 "Swayambhū Visvakarmanahh."

"There was then no earth, no water, no fire, no aether, no knowledge, no smell, no sense, no Brahma, no Vishnu, no Rudra, no stars, there was only vacancy of space. Only the self-existent Visvakarmaya had being."

So says *Mulastambha*, a book nearly as old as the Rig Veda. Visvakarmayā is therein portrayed as one god, who has eyes on every side, faces on every side, arms on every side, and feet on every side. He is all-wise and all-seeing, the creator of the heaven and the earth. He alone assigns to gods their names, and to him the other beings resort for instruction. Such was the veneration paid to Visvakarmaya, the progenitor of the Visvakarma Race. His facial aspect, unlike those of other Hindoo deities, is free from all ferocity of expression. Benignity is the salient character of his features. It is said that Brahmins sprang from Brahmaya's face, the Kshatriya from his hands, the Vaisya from his thighs, and the Sudras from his feet. The Brahmaya mentioned here and the god Visvakarmaya are identical, are one and the same person the self-existing invisible creator of the universe.

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE FIVE SONS OF VISVAKARMA.

The five sons of Visvakarmaya are said to have sprung from his faces, and they were therefore Brahmins. Far from resting this fact of their being Brahmins on mere vague groundless assertion, we will quote in support of it a passage from the very best authority on the subject, the Vedas themselves :—

"Rig Vedam manuschaiva  
 "Yajur Vedam Mayastathā  
 "Twashṭānām Sāma Vedaneha  
 "Atharvanā Silpi kastathā  
 "Visvagnā Pranava Vedancha  
 "Pancha Vedantu Brahmanā."

"Manu was the author of the Rig Veda, Maya of the Yajur, Twashṭār of the Sāma, Silpi of the Atharvana and Visvagnā of the Pranava; and all the five Vedies were Brahmins."

We will advance another quotation from the same source which establishes both their caste and occupation :—

"Ayā Manu Rig Vedam  
 "Mayā dāru Yajustathā  
 "Tāmrām Twashṭāra jā Sāmam  
 "Silā Silpi Atharvanah  
 "Visvāgna swarnaka Pranavām  
 "Pancha Brahmana Vidhiyata."

"Manu was a Blacksmith and author of Rig Veda, Maya was a Carpenter and author of Yajur Veda, Twashṭār was a brasier and author of Sāma Veda, Silpi was a mason and author of Atharvana Veda, and Visvagnā was a goldsmith and author of Pranava Veda. Know that these five Vedies were Brahmins."

Yet another quotation, this time from Vyjayanta places beyond all cavil or doubt the fact that the descent of the Visvakarma caste is from Brahmaya :—

"Sasajita Brahma purāhi lōkam  
 "Purvāgnī Yāmya Dikdēsa vyāptam  
 "Tanya bhūtāni balāni tatsikham  
 "Satyāda vichchēda Prajāpatibhyāḥ."

"In the remote past Brahmaya who ruled the East, the South-East and the South created the world. To make crowns in the world thus created other gods save Brahmaya are unskilled and ill-qualified. In verity this crown-making caste (the Visvakarma caste) is directly descended from Brahmaya."

Not only were the five sons of Visvakarma Brahmins by birth, but all these who are by birth members of the Visvakarma caste have also a claim to that origin and a right to that name. As the Brahman sprang from Brahma's mouth, as he was the first born, and as he possesses the Vedas, he is, by right the lord of the whole creation. (Manu I. 93, p. 25)

The name "Jagatguru," the teacher of the world, is a distinction to which the people of the Visvakarma caste alone are entitled. (Winslow's Dictionary) When the world-famed Sankaracharya of Travancore, the founder of the Advaita School of Philosophy, which is Buddhism in disguise, halted at Masulipatam, he styled himself "Jagatguru." The Dewakammalars of South India, who were very jealous of their title, incensed at an apparent imposter trying to assume what was their own exclusive property, questioned his right to the distinction, when the celebrated philosopher sang the following lines:—

"Achāryö Sankarö nāma,  
"Twashtha putrō nasansayā,  
"Viprakula gurördiksha,  
"Visvakarmantu Brahmana."

"My name is Sankarāchārya, I am a descendant of Twashtar. I have come here to teach the Vipras the right of wearing the sacred thread. I am a Brahmin of the Visvakarma caste." (Sankara Vijaya.) This is irrefutable proof that the people of the Visvakarma caste are Brahmins.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### KING MAHASAMMATA WAS OF THE SOORYA WANSA.

Manu was the first son of Visvakarmaya. The name "Manu" is derived from the Sanskrit root "man" to know (the Vedas). Medhatithi states that "Prajapati" Manu was a particular individual, perfect in the study of many branches of the Vedas. Govinda Raga closely agrees with him and says that Manu was a great sage. Kulluka Bhatta gives Manu a higher and more exalted character. He says that Manu was a manifestation or incarnation of the Supreme Being. Manu is again represented as a king, who by his humility gained kingly power. This is the character by which he is known to us. He was the king Mahasamata. From him arose the most illustrious lines of kings—the Solar,

the Chola, and the Chaiukya. He was a Blacksmith of the Visvakarma caste and was of the Soorya Wansa. All our kings of the Mahawansa from Wijoyo down to Mahasen, derive their origin from this Manu, the Blacksmith King of the Soorya Wansa, but all these kings and potentates pale to utter insignificance before the glory of him whom the world reverses for his boundless benevolence of heart and ineffable kindness of soul. We mean the great Buddha, who being a Sakya Prince, was directly descended from Manu, the Blacksmith King.

Although the descendants of Visvakarmaya have lost their position owing to the machinations of the modern Go-Brahmins and the Govi, both in Madras and Ceylon, they are still held in great respect in some parts of India. In Tiruvanamalai, a holy shrine and place of worship of great renown, all the obsequies pertinent to a Brahmin dead are observed in the humation of a Visvakarmaman. In some parts of Northern India they are reigning princes. What then is the secret of their being held as the people of a low caste both in Madras and Ceylon, by those of another caste which has no colourable title whatever to claim an equality, much less a superiority, to the one which they have combined to malign? The answer is to be found in the potent Govi cabal formed to decry the Visvakarmans in season and out of season, a slight to which the want of numbers and lack of cohesion of the Visvakarmans have constrained them to submit nolens volens. Still they cannot lose their birth-right to the position of real Brahmins, their title to which they will some day rise from their lethargy and indifference to assert and establish, despite all opposition from Govi cabals.

Deferring for a moment the selection and citation of Eastern authorities on the subject, let us see what European scholars of independent research, who have no interest to be swayed by feelings of partiality, either one way or the other, have said of it.

Cadwalader-Waddy, a Barrister-at-Law, an independent and unbiased critic, in speaking of the Visvakarma caste

as follows in the *Madras Times* of 21st November, 1871 :—“Masonry or Free-masonry is two thousand years old in this Presidency, and the signs and symbols are carved on some of the temples. This caste is a strict Brahmin caste.”

Dr. A. C. Burnell, another unfettered labourer in the field, pointing out to a work called *Mulastambha*, a skit manuscript of great antiquity, now in the Palace library of Tanjore, says :—“This appears to consist of a dialogue between Iswara and Shammukha, full of mystic meaning, intended to show that there are really five Vedas, one for each of the five classes of artisans, and that Brahminical Vedas are not the real Vedas.”

Rev. J. E. Padfield, another impartial worker, writes in *Christian College Magazine*, Vol. III., p. 284, the following paragraph :—“The Goldsmith caste, many of whom are carpenters, workers in brass and copper, are themselves a class of Brahmins having their own share in the Vedas, and their ritual.”

Hunter, in his history of India, speaking of the Aryan civilisation, says :—“The Aryan tribes, mentioned in the Vedas were acquainted with various metals, they had blacksmiths, coppersmiths and goldsmiths amongst them, besides carpenters and other artisans.”

Among Indian authorities Rajendra Lal Mitra, in his “Indo-Aryan” strongly supports this observation. The combined effect of all these quotations tends to establish beyond all doubt the fact that the people of the Visvakarma caste, descended as they are from the Vedic Brahmins of undoubted Brahmathma, are themselves pure original Brahmins. Even the authority of these independent scholars sings to insignificance before that of the sacred *Sastras* on the unquestionable warrant of which, the right of the Visvakarmans to the rank of Brahmins is too well established to be shaken by the groundless cavil of their hereditary enemies, the modern Go-Brahmins of India and the Govi of Ceylon.

The caste of Manu, the Blacksmith, who was afterwards elected as king Mahasammata, must now be apparent to every thinking man. Descended from Visvakarmaya’s face he was a Brahmin of the Visvakarma caste. He was moreover of the Solar Race or Soorya Wansa, and that his descendants had the right to their ancestor’s Wansa is evidenced by the following ancient Sinhalese saying :—“Suddha Suriya Wansa Manukula Mahante garu Navandanno,”—the pure Soorya Wansa Navandanno of Mahante, the descendants of Manu.”

## CHAPTER V.

### THE FALL OF THE CITY OF MANTOTTE BY THE TREACHERY OF VYASA.

The descendants of Manu referred to in the last quotation are the Goldsmiths of the city of Mahante the modern Mantotte. The *Ceylon Gazetteer* in its page 158 says :—“Mantotte is a village of the Northern Province situated on the main road from Colombo to Jaffna, 13 miles north of Arippo. At a small distance to the east are some ancient ruins, which tradition mentions as being the site of buildings belonging to a company of Goldsmiths.” This meagre reference hardly conveys to the reader any fair idea of the village Mānté or of the distinguished class of people that lived there, or of the kings that reigned over them.

The city of Mahante was built and inhabited by a certain section of the Visvakarma caste some 600 years before Christ. That they were the descendants of Manu, and that they were of the Soorya Wansa, the old Sinhalese saying quoted above firmly establishes. The city was protected by a magnetic fort, and in it lived the kings and queens that held the sovereign power over that city. The celebrated Vēda Vyāsa; whose full name is Christnā Dwaipāyana Vyāsa, who was a Sudraya by caste, caused a dissension amongst the inhabitants of the city, and incited the king Bartulahāri to take immediate action against it. He laid seige to the fort,

took it by assault, and committed it to flames. The city fell, and the Visvakarmans were dispersed. To complete their ruin, Vyāsa prevailed upon an Indian Raja called Tharani to impose a tax on their articles of trade. The Visvakarmans sternly refused to submit to this unjust levy, on the ground that all the governments of the fifty-six countries into which Jambudwipa was divided, ruled according to their advice, and that they had never paid any taxes before. This refusal hardened Tharani's heart against them, and he sent them to prison. Tajei Patannākaru, the governor of a neighbouring city, incensed at the unjust treatment of the Visvakarmans laid seige to Tharani's fort and took it by storm, and the ill-advised policy of Tharani at last cost him his life.

The fall of the city of Mahante was a death blow to the temporal power of the Visvakarmans of that city. This act of treachery on the part of the evil-doer Vyāsa, caused the ruin of a city and the destruction of a monarchy that had lasted for centuries upon centuries.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE SUBVERSION OF THE SPIRITUAL POWER OF THE VISVAKARMANS BY VYASA.

Having overthrown the temporal power of the Visvakarmans, the Rshi now turned his mind to the subversion of their spiritual power also. The Goldsmiths of India claiming to be the only real Brahmins, were the sole spiritual advisers to the reigning families of Jambuddwipa. It was to undermine this strong position of the Visvakarmans that Vyāsa now schemed.

In the time of the Soreen Raja Parimolan, Vyāsa endeavoured to induce that potentate to dismiss the Goldsmiths and to install him and his family as priests to the Royal household. The Rshi's request was sternly rejected. The Raja dying shortly after his brother was raised to the throne.

Vyāsa approached the new king with a similar request. Here, too, Vyāsa experienced defeat, but his defeat only nerved him to renewed exertion. Raja Parimalan had an illegitimate son by name Kalinga. This young man was an infamous reprobate, and in the utter heartlessness of the promise held out to Kalinga and in the enormity of the crime he subsequently perpetrated, Vyāsa was a reprobate no less. He offered Kalinga his aid to kill the reigning monarch and to raise him to the throne, if he should employ the Rshi and his family as officiating priests in the Royal household. In this Vyāsa was completely successful. Kalinga killed his uncle with the help of Vyāsa and ascended the throne. The young Raja, however, endeavoured to make good his promise to Vyāsa, without any offence to the Visvakarmans, who were then the recognised priests of the land. He tried a compromise, by offering to divide the sacred honours between them. Here opposition came from a quarter he least expected. The Visvakarmans rejected the offer with scorn. In wrath Kalinga invested Vyāsa and his family with the dignity. This led to a very serious consequence. The people refused to cultivate the lands as the religious ceremonies were no longer performed by the Visva Brahmins. Vyāsa was equal to the occasion. He caused the king to declare those who sided him as the right hand, and those who supported the Visva Brahmins as the left hand caste. Such is the origin of the great social revolution of the Presidency of Madras. From this dates the beginning of the downfall of the Visva Brahma or the Goldsmith caste, and of the rise and progress of the other castes.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE VISVAKARMANS OF MADRAS.

The Visva Brahmins of Madras have for centuries past maintained a most dignified and an animated fight with the modern Brahmins for supremacy in Hindoo society. They scorned to enter into the lists with the Wellals and others of a like social grade. Their fights always were with the

Go-Brahmins of the present day Hunter completely supports this. 'In Southern "India,"' says that historian, "the Goldsmiths strenuously resisted the rule of the Brahmins, and for ages claime'd to be the spiritual guides, styling themselves 'Acharyas,' and 'religious teachers,' wearing the sacred thread." As a result of this lasting struggle there arose between these two factions many a dispute, the settlement of which often demanded the intervention of Courts of Justice.

The first case was the *Regina vs. Sivakoti Virabahadrudoo*, No. 18 of 1894, of Assistant Magistrate's Court, Masulipatam. The offence charged by the indictment was "Defiling an object held sacred by a class of persons, intending to insult their religion, or knowing it likely that such persons would consider it an insult to their religion, an offence punishable under section 295 of the Indian Penal Code." The finding was not guilty. The judgment ran as follows:—"This case was first taken up by the Stationary Sub-Magistrate Bandar, but on petition from the accused's pleader, the District Magistrate transferred it to my file. The complaint is that the accused, a Goldsmith by caste, on the night of the last *Mahāsivarātri*, entered the temple of *Kasivisvēsvara-Swami* in Rustambada, Masulipatam, and performed the ceremony known as 'Abhishekam' by pouring coconut water over the 'Lingam,' that thereby the Brahmins considered their religion insulted, the Lingam polluted, and Samprokshanam (purification) necessary."

"In criminal revision cases Nos. 421 and 422 of 1885, there was a difference of opinion between the two learned Judges who delivered judgment, but the question was not referred to a full bench, so that an authoritative decision is wanting. I therefore considered myself at liberty to follow in the lines laid down by Mr. Justice Muttuswamy Aiár, in considering that the word *defile* has lost altogether its primary meaning, and must be taken here as elsewhere to mean "to make ceremonially or ritually impure," and also with due respect to the contrary opinion of the learned dissentient Judge "that there are no sufficient reasons for holding that section 295 is applicable only as between those who

follow different religions and not as between different sects or classes of Hindcoos, who are animated by sectarian feelings."

"It was the avowed object of the Law Commissioner in framing these sections 295 to 298 to suppress all causes, which might lead to riots and affrays, and in this town itself, the sectarian jealousy between the Komatiyas (Vaisyas) and the Brahmins is so keen, that it is impossible to say to what steps they might not resort, each to maintain each's rights and privileges. It is even suggested that the accused who works in the godowns of Komaie, was instigated by him to insult the Brahmins in this way. I have therefore, taken evidence. This accused admits that he performed with his own hands the ceremony of "Abhishekam." It remains then to be decided whether he did so to insult the religion of the Brahmins, or, if not, whether he had the knowledge that the Brahmins were likely to consider his act "defilement of the Lingamoorty," as an insult to their religion. The evidence adduced by the prosecution showed conclusively that in the opinion of Brahmins the Lingam was defiled by the goldsmith's performance of "Abhishekam," purification was thereby rendered necessary, and their religion was insulted. It was claimed that that the accused's intent must be presumed from the following circumstances: (a) that the Archaka (temple priest) the first witness saw the accused in the temple, knew him personally, and asked him to remain near "the sacred bull" till his return; (b). that accused's brother was convicted of the same offence, previously by the Town Magistrate of Vizagapatam; (c) that there is a great dispute between the Vaisyas and Brahmins in the town, and has been put up by him to insult the common enemy. However, I do not infer intention from this. The accused knew of no reason why he should wait till the "Archaka" came back, and so did not wait. It is true that his brother was convicted by the Town Magistrate, but this conviction was reverted by the District Magistrate and the fine refunded. When I asked the accused if he knew why, he said it was because his brother had done nothing wrong, and the answer appeared to me *bona fide* and reasonable. Assertion (c) is

a mere supposition without proof and need not be taken into consideration. But, above all, if he had intended to insult the Brahmins, he would have made his intention perfectly clear. As a matter of fact, there were actually two Brahmins standing near at the time the accused performed 'Abhishekam,' and they said they did not know he was a goldsmith. They thought he was a Brahmin. There were no means of distinguishing. If the 'Archaka' had not happened to know him personally, the accused would have performed the ceremony and gone away quietly afterwards without any one knowing anything about it. The accused further says that he is a Visva Brahmin by caste, and a Kamsala (goldsmith) by occupation, and he called several Kammalars who supported him, all saying they had 'Brahmathma,' and could perform the same ceremonies as Brahmins, including 'Abhishekam.' I have not the power to decide this question, and his point must be clearly understood by both parties, the question is for an Ecclesiastical Court to decide, but I do decide that their contention was *bona fide*. They produced several authorities and several traditions in which they appear implicitly to believe. They also produced a record of proceedings of a meeting in this very town some years ago, in which the Brahminical rights of the Visva Brahmins were recognised, with the important addition that an influential Brahmin presided. The evil intention is then most decidedly negatived. 'Did the accused know that the Brahmins were likely to consider his act as an insult to their religion?' How could he? The evidence for the defence showed that several Kammalars to his knowledge had performed this 'Abhishekam' in this very temple itself, and no prosecution had followed, no purification taken place. The question of the right to perform 'Abhishekam' has not, so far as the evidence shows, been raised in the recent dispute at the town, and his own brother had once been tried and acquitted on appeal, and finally how could he consider an act which in his *bona fide* opinion was no defilement, could could be considered to insult the religion of any one, least of all his own religion, which is the same as that of the Brahmins. I am of opinion that the accused, who had never been to this temple before, was aware of no rule,

which would prohibit him from performing the 'Abhishekam' himself, and that the accused performed the ceremony *bona fide*, as an act of worship, hoping thereby to gain the special *punyaam*, which the witness declare results from the performance of 'Abhishekam,' in this temple of Kasivisvesvara Swami, on the day of Mahasivaratri.

"The accused must therefore be acquitted under section 258 of the Criminal Procedure Code."

J. W. HUGHES,  
"Assistant Magistrate, 2nd Class."

The other case, which arose between these two contending factions, brought into prominence and conflict the claims of each party to the position and honour of Brahmins. It was a civil matter, and it not only exposed the base origin of the modern Brahmins, but firmly established the right of the Goldsmiths to be regarded as the real original Brahmans mentioned in the Vedas.

The circumstances that gave birth to the case were these. In the year 1818, in the village Saturperi, in the jilla of Chitpur, Madras Presidency, some Kammalars were engaged in solemnising a marriage. A Marka Sahaya Achari was acting as Guru. It would be necessary to know at the very outset that the marriage ceremonies of the Kammalars of Goldsmiths and those of the modern Brahmins present no points of difference. They are exactly alike. A Pan-changan Kundayan, a vicious Brahmin of that town, having determined to put down this practice by the use of force, invaded the premises of the Goldsmith where the ceremony was being performed, pulled down a pandal and caused much loss and damage to the family. Marka Sahaya Achari claiming to be a real Dewa Brahmin insisted upon his right to perform the ceremony and to solemnise the marriage. Kundayan, on the other hand, persisted that that right vested only in him and other Brahmins like him.

It was subsequently agreed between the contending

parties that the determination of their disputes be referred to the arbitration of a Panchayath consisting of the following learned men :—1, Visvanatha Sastriar; 2, Nagorje Rao; 3, Sanmugam Pandithar; 4, Subraya Mudali; and 5, Venkataramana Yudugaroo. The Panchayat after a careful investigation decided the matters in dispute entirely in favour of the Goldsmiths, and held that the Kammalars are real original Brahmins, and that they, as such, have the right to perform the ceremony. Despite the advice of Somasundra Pillai, a most learned man of the Wellala caste, who pointed out to the irate Brahmin the undoubted right the Dewa Brahmins have to the performance of such rites and ceremonies, Kundayan accused the Panchayat of unfair conduct and caused a disturbance at the meeting. Marka Sabaya Achari prosecuted Kundayan and his followers for assault. Fifteen witnesses proved the charge, of which Kundayan and his adherents were found guilty and fined. The Magistrate advised Marka Sabaya Achari to sue the unruly Kundayan and his peccant adherents for damages. Hence was the suit.

*Plaintiffs :—*

- 1 Vellai Achari,
- 2 Marka Sahaya Achari,
- 3 Ruttira Achari,
- 4 Venkada Jalachari,
- 5 Nallachari,
- 6 Kulandei Achari,
- 7 Sinna Cannu Achari,
- 8 Aruna Jalachari,
- 9 Mahadevastapati,
- 10 Varadachari,
- 11 Dakshina Murti and
- 12 Sthastthapati.

*Plaintiffs' Counsel :—*  
Abdul Saibo.

*Defendants :—*

- 1 Panchangan Kundayan,
- 2 Arunajala Aiyar,
- 3 Venkida Suppu Sastri,
- 4 Visvapathi Sastri,
- 5 Thottachari,
- 6 Ekkiatik Sakar,
- 7 Vyasa Sater,
- 8 Soorya Narayana Sastri,
- 9 Jyoti Sastri and
- 10 Venda Vasi Sirastar.

*Defendants' Counsel :—*  
Arunasalam Mudali.

*Authorities cited by the Plaintiffs :—*

- 1 Yajur Veda,
- 2 Purusha Sukta,
- 3 Moolasthambla,
- 4 Vachehi Rasi,
- 5 Vēmana Patyam and
- 6 Kapila Rakavali.

*Authorities cited by the Defendants :—*  
None.

*Plaintiffs' Witnesses :—*

- 1 Andiappa Mudali,
- 2 Vankara Naraya Chetty,
- 3 Kopiku Chetty,
- 4 Appasamy Pulle and
- 5 Venkida Suppa Nayakan.

The plaint averred :

1. That the plaintiffs are the direct descendants of the five Rshis Sanka, Sanatana, Pratana, Abhuvanasa and Supernasa, better known as Manu, Maya, Twashtar, Silpi and Visagna respectively, the five sons of the God Visvakarmaya, born of his five faces, Satyojatya, Vamadewaya, Aghoraya, Tatpurushaya and Esanaya, and that accordingly they are pure original Brahmins.

2. That while they were engaged in performing a marriage ceremony at the 1st plaintiff's house, the defendants wrongfully entered into it, beat some of the guests, committed damage and disturbed the ceremony.

3. They claim Rs. 550 damages and costs of action.

4. They pray also for an injunction restraining the defendants from all future disturbances of a like nature in the performance of such ceremonies by the plaintiffs.

The defendants' answer, on the other hand, alleged that the plaintiffs had no connection whatever with the Rshis

of the family of Brahmins. They are of a mixed origin, and they have no authority to perform such ceremonies. The defendants, on the contrary, are the acknowledged priests and Brahmins of the country, and the plaintiffs suffered no damages.

The plaintiffs' reply had a most crushing and disastrous effect on the pretensions of the Brahmins. Their base origin was exposed in a minute. The birth of the fifteen Rshis, to whom the Brahmins trace their descent, is pointed out to be of the lowest character. Kalikot Rshi, the reply averted was born of a deer; Kowsika was the bastard son of a Maharaja; Jambuka was born of a jackal; Gautama of a cow; Valmiki of a pariah girl; Agastya of a water pot; Vyasa of a fisher-woman; Vashista of the harlot Urvasi; Kowndanya of a widow; Narada of a washer-woman; Matanga of a chakkili woman; Mandavaya of a frog; Sankhya of a pariah woman; Gargaya of a donkey; and to crown all Sownegar was born of a bitch.

The defendants' rejoinder was feebleness itself. They hid their faces in shame and admitted the low origin attributed to the Rshis, but they tried to take shelter under the assertion that though low in birth, their ancestors had the Bhahmathma, and that they are the real Brahmins acknowledged as such by nearly all the Rajas of India.

The decision of Judge Decker was equally severe. In a judgment conspicuous for its lucidity of language, and unanswerable for its soundness of logic, he condemned the defendants to pay to the plaintiffs the full amount of damages claimed with costs, and restrained them from all future molestations of the plaintiffs in such circumstances. The judgment was as follows :—

#### JUDGMENT.

1. "From the documentary and other evidence adduced "on either side the plaintiffs' averment that on the unquestionable authority of the Veedas, they are the real original

"Brahmins of the Visvakarma Caste, and that the defendants "are of a low and mixed origin is clearly established.

2. "The defendants say that they are the real Brahmins, "and that the plaintiffs are people of a low caste, but they "have not produced any authority or argument in support "of it.

3. "The Puranical account of the birth of the Rshis "is quite in conformity with what the plaintiffs have quoted "from Vachchiras and Vemanapatyam. The defendants in "their answer have not only denied that the fifteen Rshis "were not their ancestors, but they have gone further and "alleged that these Rshis had Brahmathmam." Verily the "descendants of Brahmins cannot be from low castes and "animals. Besides, if their descent were not low, the Pura- "nas would not prohibit inquiry into their origin.

4. "According to the account sent in by the Pundit "Sathurman, the origin of the Rshis is exactly such as has "been stated by the plaintiffs. Moreover, they lived long "after the institution of caste came into existence. Neither "have the defendants adduced any reason to support that the "descendants of these Rshis are Brahmins.

5. "If the defendants are superior to other people in "point of caste, then they must have some decent calling or "occupation. So far from this being the case, they wander "from place to place and lead the lives of mendicants.

6. "It does not appear that the defendants have any "claim to a line or a syllable of the Vedas. The ignorant "accept them as people of a high class. They have deceived "foolish men and imbecile kings and managed to have them- "selves admitted as priests. It is now the duty of Govern- "ment to find out the truth, and govern accordingly.

7. "The professions followed by the plaintiffs, who "are the descendants of the five-faced Visva Brahmal, are "on the contrary, according to the Yajur Veda, the support

"of the whole animal creation, even unto such insects as "ants. It may therefore be safely believed that the plaintiffs "are the real Brahmans.

8. "If the Maha Bharata and the Puranas speak dis-  
"paragingly of Visvakarmaya, such detractions may well be  
"supposed to be the fabrications of the defendants' ancestors,  
"and besides they are inferior to the Vedas in importance.

9. "The case has been completely established against  
"the defendants, and it is ordered that they do pay to the  
"plaintiffs Rs. 559 damages.

10. "It is further ordered that the plaintiffs shall be  
"at liberty to perform their own religious and other cere-  
"monies according to the Vedas as they have hitherto done,  
"and that the defendants are restrained from interfering  
"with the plaintiffs hereafter.

11. "It is also ordered that the defendants do pay  
"Rs. 91 and 12 Annas as costs.

...      "J. H. DECKER,  
                *"Magistrate."*

The 15th December, 1818.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### NATIVE JUDGES AND ENGLISH JUDGES.

Such was the outcome of the memorable trial of the claims of the two contending factions, before a learned and impartial Judge. Had the decision of this important contest been placed in the hands of a black man, with his mind tainted by the bane of caste, be he a Sinhalese, Burgher, Tamil, or Moor, conceding to him the utmost perfection of human intelligence, the result would have been perfectly different, and with it truth would have been defeated, falsehood triumphant, and the Brahmins jubilant. Our obser-

vation is the fruit of experience gained from distances in this country and in the neighbouring continent, the mental turn of which and that of our own Island, are cast in the same mould. Such is the strength of the hold, which caste has in the minds of the people of Ceylon, even amongst the most intelligent of them, that this crying evil of the soil has invaded even the judicial seats of it, and tainted their judgments. We will cite two instances. A Sinhalese Magistrate of an up-country Police Court sentenced a Visva Brahmin to a month's rigorous imprisonment, for what? for a simple slap on the face of a Natucotta Chetty for abuse, the reason for this severe sentence being that the Visva Brahmin, who he said was a low caste man, had no right to beat a Chetty, who he said was a high caste man, a circumstance which aggravated the crime. This iniquitous decision had only to be shown to those august Judges of the Supreme Court to evoke their utter abhorrence and reprobation of it. That serene Judge, Sir Archibald Lawrie, censured the Magistrate for his rashness and set aside the disgraceful judgment which reflected discredit on the Magistrate and cast a slur on the administration of Justice; the learned Judge only imposed a fine of ten Rupees on the passionate man, who was doubtless guilty of a breach of His Majesty's laws of the country, remarking that sentence would amply meet the exigencies of the case.

The second disgraceful instance was the sin of an up-country Gansabhawa President, who had the unparalleled audacity to fine a Duraya caste man ten rupees for calling a Wellala caste man "meha." The sense of justice of the Englishman, who ruled the destinies of the Central Province at the time, revolted against this decision and crushed it in a second. Generally a Burgher or a Sinhalese Magistrate has his favourites amongst proctors that practice in his Court, and his open partiality is a source of great chagrin to the other practitioners, and a peril to the impartial administration of Justice.

Similar is the case in India. In the prosecution of a Hindoo Goldsmith for an alleged defiling of the sacred

Lingam, because he performed in a Hindoo Temple the High Mass called "Abhishekam," the Native Magistrate convicted the accused, but the conviction was set aside in appeal by an English Judge. Wherever the hearing of such a case was entrusted to a Native Magistrate, conviction followed as the wheel follows the cart, but wherever it was placed in the hands of a European Judge, acquittal followed as the shadow follows the man.

We could cite many more instances of a like disgraceful complexion, but we refuse to harrow and weary the mind of the reader by the recounting of such shameful and dishonourable scenes, which form a source of great peril to the character of the entire Native population of both countries, and a signal injury to their interests.

All these pernicious tendencies are a clear outcome of the prejudice of caste, and perhaps also of a palpable want of a fair knowledge of the literature which treats of that harsh and meaningless institution under which people groan and cry for relief.

If that foolish Magistrate who sentenced the Visva Brahmin to a month's rigorous imprisonment, for a simple slap on a Natucotta Chetty's face, had known aught of that literature, he would have discovered the immense superiority of the caste of the man whom he looked down upon as low to that of the man whom he regarded as high. We cannot, we dare not, suppose that the Native Magistrate was conscious that he was doing wrong at the time he passed that harsh sentence on the Visva Brahmin. We do know by experience that the prejudice of caste can go great lengths, but we refuse to believe that the human mind can be guilty of such huge depravity.

These evils should open the eyes of our administrators to safeguard the liberty of the subject from such injurious invasions. The remedy is to be found only in the appointment of Englishmen to fill the judicial posts of the Island. The sense of justice of an Englishman as a general rule,

is congenital, is bred in the bone. It is but seldom that the sacredness of this justice suffers at the hands of Englishmen of culture.

The practice of our rulers have been otherwise. When they think that the administration of justice may safely be placed in the hands of Native Judges, they absolutely refuse to trust native men in the revenue departments, attaching decidedly more importance to the latter. What that national principle that guides these wise men in their policy is, it is not easily perceived, but let us believe in the goodness of it.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE PRE-VEDIC PERIOD.

The dispersion of the descendants of Visvakarmaya from their original place of abode in the central regions of Asia has every sign and character of a sudden and unexpected event. It seems to have taken place, when Manu, Matsya and Twashtar were in existence, for they joined the migrations that subsequently arrived in India. As to what became of the other two Brahmans, Silpi and Visvagna, history tells us nothing. There is no record that all the five brothers took the same route. Perhaps Silpi's inclinations made him prefer a Western clime to a warm Eastern one. Silpi or Abhyavanas Rshi was a mason. The prodigious advance of the Greeks made in architecture and statuary indicates an attitude, more the result of an innate heredity than the outcome of any acquired power, in which heredity had no concern. It may then be supposed that Silpi and his descendants settled down in Greece, and taught their descendants, who were afterwards called Greeks, the art of masonry, an art in which the proficiency they acquired stands without a parallel in the world. Visvagna Rshi was a goldsmith. As to whether or not he too joined his elder brothers in their migrations towards India historical chronicles are silent, but it is sufficient here to observe that Maya and Mayya with their descendants settled down in India so

Here between the Himalaya and the Ganges mountains, a tract of land, which once bore the name of Bhimavarta, name which is now confined to the region between the divine rivers Sarasvati and Drisadvati, where alone, according to Manu, the ancients and genuine Brahmins dwell.\*

That these immigrants did not all start at the same time, and that they did not take the same route are evident from the fact that they alighted upon India's soil from different points. Twashitar leaving his city of light, first arrived at Indra Krichram, the Indukush of the present day. From thence they spread out in various directions, and settled down in different parts of India, some in Kashmir, some along the banks of the Punjab and its tributaries, and some on the banks of the Ganges, while Maya Brahma, the Carpenter, who built the great palace of Youdhishthira, had his place of abode on the Himalayas. They all progressed from North to South, establishing settlements in their route. Maya did not, however, make the Himalaya his permanent abode, but descending from that mountain he alighted upon a tract of land lying close to the source of the Brahmaputra. He at first styled this portion of land as "Māyās Rama," which he afterwards changed into the more euphonious appellation of "Bhusthan," signifying that it was the spot on which he at last halted. The land extending from the Brahmaputra on the East, to the Ganges on the West, was known as "Dewa Bhumi," meaning the land of the celestials. Who were the celestials that lived in this "Dewa Bhumi"?

\*There is a well-founded tradition in India, that a certain Sage named Bhōja went over to Europe from India, and the races inhabiting that country are supposed to be his descendants.

Europa is said to be the daughter of Brahma. This shows the relationship between the people of the East with those of the West.

The Sagē Bhōja was a member of the ancient Masonic community of India. He was, therefore, a member of the Visvakarma or the Karmāra caste.

Who but the descendants of Sānāka and Sānatana, Manu and Maya, the first two sons of Visvakarmaya, the progenitor of the Visvakarma caste? It is this tract of land which Manu afterwards christened by the name of "Aryadesa" or "Aryavarta," the land of the Aryans. The well-known Battaramulle Swami of Ceylon, out and out the best of modern Sinhalese poets, a scholar in whose ear alone the sweet melody of Sri Rahula's verses has fallen, in his book called "Sudra Nirnaya Darpanaya" says, "There are people of noble birth in Aryavarta." This is very true and they are the celestials, the descendants of the God Visvakarma, the progenitor of the Navandanna caste. In other words, they are the Visva Brahmins of the present day.

The present day artisans known in Tamil as Kammalars, in Telugu as Kamsala, and in Sanskrit as Panchāla, are the descendants of these Aryans who crossed the Punjab long before the birth of Vyasa. This tribe of Aryans was in ancient times known under the designation of Visva Brahmins, Dewa Brahmins, and Dewa Kammalars, in contradistinction to the modern Go-Brahmins, the descendants of Vashista and other Rshis, whose base descent we have already noticed. These Aryans during their stay in India built many famous temples, palaces and cities, which stand up to the present day as signal monuments of their great skill in architecture.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE RELIGION OF THE EARLY ARYANS.

The early Aryans had no particular form of religious worship. They worshipped one true God by meditation alone, a form of religious worship, of which in after years, Muhammed Mustapha proved himself to be so valient and redoubtable a champion. That is the more modern form of worship, pure mental channel to lift up hearts through devotion to an Almighty God.

What does it matter what form of worship a man adopts, as long as he honestly and firmly believes in that he has preferred and leads a sinless life here? This is the end of all religion, to lead a life of virtue on this side of the grave in this world, with the sacerdotal assurance that life everlasting will be the guerdon in the next. All religions are but the media, the channels, through which the true God is worshipped. Brahma says, "I am the same to all mankind, they who honestly serve other gods involuntarily worship me. I am he who partaketh of all worship. I am the reward of all worshippers." How comprehensive, how merciful is this declaration of the mild Hindoo, when compared with the pronouncements of other gods! On the other hand, what if a man pursues no manner of religious worship whatever but leads a spotless life here? Surely virtue here, on this earth, in this life, cannot be visited with penal servitude and castigation hereafter.

The simplicity of the primitive religion of our forefathers, the religion of worshipping one God, was destined to receive a profound impression by the discovery of agriculture, a discovery which was due to a simple act of reasoning from an accidental circumstance. When some Aryans of Nepal, called Janjums, were wending their way towards the Vindhya Mountains, they saw the sage Agastya crossing the hills with a staff in his hand. In the line of the impressions left on the ground by the crutch of the Rshi, the Janjums saw vegetation growing luxuriantly after rain. From this they formed the idea that the earth required tilling for cultivation. Such is the reputed origin of agriculture in India. At the time of this discovery the people subsisted on bamboo seeds, barley, the herbs of the forest, and the milk of their cows. For drink they had the juice of bilva fruits. This seems to be a euphemism for some kind of alcoholic drink, which, in its inebriating principle, was hardly second to any of our present day intoxicants. The anathemas which the Sastras seem to have from time to time hurled against the drunkard give colour to our observation. The constant occurrence of cases of delirium tremens and the multiplicity of recipes to counteract the odour of wine from

age was very frequently indulged in even by the members of the highest rank. This was precisely the fact. Of fermented drinks four kinds are mentioned, of which Soma Nectar was the most celebrated. The Rig Veda is most lavish in its praise. The more one drank of it, the more one had the inclination to drink of it. The infection was not confined to laymen only. It invaded the rank of the gods and their priests. Visvarupa, the priest of the gods, and son of Twashtar Prajapati, the Coppersmith, who and whose apprentices named Ribhu were the only persons admitted to the honour of imbibing Soma Nectar in the company of the gods, while engaged at the Soma sacrifice so freely imbibed the inebriating wine, that he disgorged the fermented contents of the interior, on the animals, brought before him, for immolation. It was then no mere juice of bilva fruits that the Aryans drank, but it was something as exciting and as cheering as any of the diabolical beverages now distilled to the disgrace of mankind. After they had entered upon the agricultural pursuits, the worship of elements, such as fire-worship, earth-worship, and so forth, for the first time came into practice. This worship of the elements, was a creature of the ancient idea that some invisible deity Presided over each element, and that if some benefit is to be derived from it, the god that held sway over the element must be propitiated. This was simply the prostration of the intellect on the threshold of ignorance. The idea was false at the bottom. The new worship was quite a trench upon the simple faith of the Magi, which consisted in worshipping one god symbolised by the sun. In course of time, however, this divine principle was itself lost in the symbol, and the sun was worshipped as god himself. The departure from the sun worship into the worship of the elements was the result of agriculture.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE VEDIC PERIOD

The Hindoos reckon their age by millions of years. The

age of Zendavesta is quite as uncertain. For past, the author of that great work, lived at a very remote period of antiquity, and if what Professor Kunte tells us in his "Vicissitudes of Aryan Civilisation," that Zoroaster alias Zarathrusta was no other than Twashtar, the brother of Manu, is true, then indeed these two great works, the Vedas and the Zendavesta must be coeval. The age of Zoroaster might give us some idea of the Vedas. Pliny compares him with the great Hebrew agitator Moses, but makes him that turbulent Israelite's predecessor by thousands of years. Aristotle and Exodus place him 6000 years before Plato. Xanthus of Lydia (470 B. C.) believes that he lived 600 years before the Trojan War. These dates are doubtless open to question, all more or less guess work from uncertain and insufficient data. These works of our modern savants hardly carry us as far back towards our early ancestors as the Zendavesta and the Rig Veda Sanhita, whose testimony as to his age must be accepted as conclusive. Now both these sacred records agree in calling the ancestors of their authors as Aryans. The Vedic Hindoos called themselves Aryas, and the tract of land they dwelt in as "Aryadesa." The home of the ancestors of Zoroaster was "Arieno Vaije." The great Darius called himself an "Aryan." If one should read between the lines, he would discover that these were the brothers of the Visvakarmans of the present day.

The meaning of the word "Zendavesta" is peculiar. It means "paraphrase" or "commentary." A commentary of what? Was it not of the Vedas? A collation and comparison of the salient passages of the two books are all that is necessary to remove all doubt on this head. Whatever that may be, the age of the Vedas can be traced to a very remote antiquity. It is generally supposed that those sacred books were written after the ancient Aryans, that is to say the descendants of Manu and his brothers, had entered India. The view expressed in the Maya Charita that the Vedas had their origin in Aryavarta lends support to the hypothesis.

"It was while the descendants of Sānaka and Sanatana, or ordinarily known as Manu and Maya, were living in the

Dewa-bhumi, the land of the celestials says Dr. Andy of Madras, "that the several Yāgams or sacrifices were performed and the hymns sung. The hymns were first turned into Mantras, then into Vākyas, and next into Sūtras, which by the use of the Pranava, which is the mystic word "Om" formed of the three letters 'a,' 'u,' 'm,' 'a' janmasthanam, "u" adisthanam, and "m" uppaphisthanam as the basis, finally developed into the Vedic form and acquired veneration. The Vedic matter was originally uttered in pieces. They in course of time fell into disuse, and in order to preserve them Rāvanā\* collected some and divided the Sāma Veda into a thousand branches. These Vedas again fell into neglect until Vēda Vyāsa collected them and classified the hymnal portion into Rik, the sacrificial portion into Yajjur, the chanting portion into Sāma, and the Sloka portion into Atharvana, thus, constituting the four Vedas as they are now known."

"There are records to prove, says the same distinguished author," how each Yāgam came into existence. At the Yāgams four priests are required to perform the ceremonies. First an Advarhu, a Yajurvēdi to represent Maya, as the Sacrificial Priest; second a Hotra, a Rigvedi, to represent Manu, as the Chanting priest; third an Udgāri, a Samavedi, to represent Twashtar as the Singing priest; and fourth a Brahmana, an Atharvanavedi, to represent Silpi, as the Superintending priest." From this it will clearly appear that the Vedas are the productions solely of the ancient Masonic Brahmins. Their descendants are distinguished by the name "Paurushayas," to mark the line of their direct descent from the original Brahmins. These were the progenitors of the Visvakarmans of the present day. The common term by which they are known is Achāri. The name is composed of the three letters 'a,' 'cha,' and 'ri,' 'a' indicating a know-

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\*Rāvanā is too well known in Ceylon to need any introduction here. He was a Brahmin of the Visvakarma karmaya. His invasion of Ceylon is well known. His stables were at Singapore.

ledge of the Vedas, 'cha' learning in Sāstras, 'ri' acquaintance with art, and these three kinds of knowledge possessed by one will alone entitle one to the appellation of "Achāri," meaning "teacher."

It will now be perfectly obvious from the facts and authorities cited above, that the people of the Achāri caste, now commonly known in Ceylon as Navandanno, belong by birth and descent to the Manuwansa of the Solar Race, or of Soorya Wansa the highest in existence. True it is that by a strong combination of the Govi and the Go-Brahmins, the social position of the Visvakarmans in Madras and Ceylon has been subverted, but no combination, however strong, no coalition however powerful, could ever rob them of their birth-right of being pure and real Paurusha Brahmins of the noblest descent.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE PRE-EMINENCE OF THE VISVAKARMANS.

The facts recounted in the foregoing pages afford ample proof of the existence, in times gone by, of powerful enemies whose pronounced acts of opposition and concerted machinations, conduced not a little to the subversion, of the once exalted position of the Visvakarma Caste. Of these powerful enemies, none was more gifted than that learned but unprincipled man, Christnā Dwaipayana Vyasa, commonly known as Veda Vyasa. He was the natural enemy of the Visva Brahmins. No circumstance could possibly afford more cogent proof of the greatness of a caste, than the testimony furnished by the writings of the very enemies of that caste, as to its greatness.

The celebrated book Mahābhārata is supposed to be a production from the peerless pen of Vyāsa. Speaking of Visvakarmaya, Mahabharata says :—

"Visvakarmā mahābhāgo chandé Silpa Prajāpatih,  
"Kartā silpa sahasrānām tridasānāmoha Vardakih,

"Bhūsanānamcha sarvēśān kartā silpa vatām varah  
"Yödivyāni Vimānāni tridasānāmaha kāraha  
"Manusyasyöpa jeeanti tasya silpan mahātmanah,  
"Poojayanticha yam nityam Visvakarmana avyayam."

"Visvakarma was the Prajapati or Lord of all industrial arts, maker of all ornaments, prince of all the artisans. The people pursued his trade and obeyed and worshipped him as an all-powerful and everlasting God." (Mahabharata I. 2592.)

Vyjayanta, another book of great authority is equally eloquent in the praises of the Visvakarma Caste. It places that caste at the head of all the other castes in existence. Its author was Vyjayanta Rshi, who dwelt on the rocky mountain Kailāsa Koota. From that exalted seat, he addresses the prince Skhanda. After describing the four Māna Sastras and the books composed by Manu, Maya and Twashtar, the Rshi says, "That the Visvakarma Brahmin Rshis were the authors of all those Māna Sastras." He describes the site necessary for building the hall, where the crown is to be made the dimensions of the hall, the nature of the Achāri that should make the crown, his dress and the things necessary for the performance of the rite of immolation, and adds :—

"Sasarjeeta Brahmapurāhi lokam  
"Poorvāgni Yāmyā dikdēsa vyāptam  
"Tadanya bhūtāni balāni tatsikham  
"Satyāda Vichchēda Prajāpatibhyāḥ."

"In the remote past, Brahmaya, who ruled the East, the South-East and the South, created the world. To make crowns in the world thus created other gods save Brahmaya are unskilled and ill-qualified. In verity this crown-making caste (the Visvakarma Caste) is directly descended from Brahmaya."

"The following quotation from the same celebrated book clearly establishes the nobility of this caste :—

"Visvavākyaś cā sānā dhē bī a vānsi,  
"Sarvāśtra dharo dakaḥ sthapati dasa kālāni."

The Achāri, who is born of the Visvakarma Caste, begotten of parents of pure and noble Visvakarma Wansas themselves, and who is instructed in all the sastras, and proficient in all the ten art becomes the chief Achāri."

Yet another quotation from the same source describes as to who should be and who should not be selected to the post of the chief Achāri :—

Tāmbras swētādi kustamcha,  
"Vētakōnmatta kāndakam  
"Sudrādi mānya jātivā  
"Sthapati parivarjayet."

"No leper, no servant, no mad or blind man, no Sudraya by caste, and no man of any other caste of a like nature is to be accepted as the chief Achāri, excepting a man of the noble Visvakarma Caste."

Still another quotation from that very work teaches us how these Achāris are to be honoured :—

"Etatcaturvidhāchāryan mānāyeth Brahmaputravat  
"Sarvakarma kriā chitram yēsamukta pramānatah."

"These four kinds of Acharis or teachers versed and proficient as they are in all the industrial arts, should be worshipped and revered as Brahmin Princes."

In ancient times, before the crafty priests usurped the right of crowning kings, that elevated duty always was the exclusive privilege of the Achāri or the Visvakarman that makes the crown. No other was, in fact, permitted to perform that ceremony excepting an Achāri of the Visvakarma Caste. This was indeed the prevailing custom at least in the East.

It was an imposing ceremony. The Achāri bedecked in all the ornaments and accompanied by his pupils, all carrying white flags, rode on an elephant immediately before the king, in the procession from the palace to the Coronation Hall, and there he crowned the king.

Great was the respect paid by the kings of old to the Achāri of the Visvakarma Caste. It was born of a dual circumstance. It was the respect justly paid to his high caste, and it was the respect earned by his honourable occupation. In the palace itself, he was offered the seat called "Vastrasana," a seat only offered to men eminent both by caste and position.

The general dress of the Achāri and the manner of wearing the hair on the head likewise afford strong proof of the nobility of his caste. The following passage is from the book called "Vishnusmrīti":—

"Suddraschaturtha varnastu sarva sanskara varjitaḥ  
"Uktah tasyatu sanskaro dwije swatma nivedanāḥ"

It establishes that the Brahmins alone had the right and privilege of wearing the kumībi, the charmed rosary and the sacred thread "Yajnopavita," and of conducting the rite of immolation, but not the Sudrayas.

According to the edicts of king Sagara, the Brahmins, Kshatriya and Vaisya alone had the right of wearing a kumībi. It is not an index of the observance of any religious commandment, but it is the badge of Aryan descent, the sign by which an Aryan is to be recognised.

Reference is made in "Ambhavisi Kāmini" to the Gautama Rshi's description of the origin and practice of wearing the sacred thread of the "Yajnopavita." It was given at the request of the king Gambharia. That the sacred badge was worn by the nobility only is evident from the following passage culled from the "Satapata Brahmana":—

"Prajāpati vaibhutāni upasidan Prajah vaibhütāni,  
Vinodehi yathachavāmā iti tato dēva yajnopayati nō-  
bhutva dakshinām jātvāchcha upāsidan tan abruvit yaj-  
novönnam amurta twamcha urgavah soorgyvō vo jotir  
iti atha ēnam pitarah prächina dvitinah savvyam jan-  
vāchya upasidan tan abruvit mäsimäsi."

The gods wearing the sacred thread and bending the right knee, and the particians wearing the sacred thread on the right shoulder and bending the left knee, approached Prajapati, the master of all creatures, and asked for sustenance (food) of life."

Now the Silpa Sastra gives a description of the Silpi, which is another name for the Visvakarman. Imagine a man wearing a rosary round the neck, a sacred thread across the shoulders, a ring made of kusa grass on the finger, firmly addicted to divine worship, faithful to his wife, remote from the influence of other women, devotedly attached to his family, and with a pure heart, practising the virtue of chastity, and you have the Silpi before you.

The right then of wearing the sacred thread the Yajnopavita, across the shoulders is the birth-right of the Silpi. It is the badge of noble descent.

The following quotation from Vishnu Purana by Vyasa gives a very high position to the Silpi :—

"Bhūsanānamcha sarvēśān  
"Kartā silpa vatān varah  
"Yah sarvēshān vimānāni  
"Devatānamcha kāraha  
"Mānusyasyöpa jeevanti  
"Tasya silpan Mahätmanah."

"He who is proficient in the art of making jewels, of building houses, of fashioning sacred images is noble."

"The Virhat Sanhitā adds another testimony to the same effect :—

"Stahāpaka daivagna dvija sthāpatin  
"Visēsato bhavya kalyānānan bhāgi bhavati  
"Parattranca swargag."

"The maker of images, the astrologer, the Brahmins, the pundits, and the Silpis, these challenge veneration."

Mānasāra adds another. "Just as Mahabrahmaya," says the authority, "created the four castes, there sprang Visvakarma from his Eastern face, Maya from his Southern, Twashtar from his Northern, and Manu from his Western. From these four there arose four others again. Visvakarma begot Sthapati, Maya procreated Sutragrahi, Twashtar evolved Vardhaki, and Manu Taksaka. These were the only Silpis in the world. Of these four, Sthapati was the teacher of the other three, Sutragrahi was the instructor of Vardhaki and Taksaka, and Vardhaki of Taksaka. Sthapati Vas learned in all the arts and sciences, Sutragrahi contrary to expectation, developed a Sudra character, but still he was a Visvakarma Brahmin by birth, and his vicious character did not deprive him of his birth-right."

That these Silpis were Brahmins is evident from the description of the Silpi given in the Silpa Sastra, namely, that he must among other things wear the sacred thread. Apart from others, this circumstance alone is sufficient to place beyond all doubt the fact that the Silpis or the people of the Visvakarma Caste are not Sudras.

Some of the pupils of Twashtar, owing to their rigid asceticism, were called Ribhu. Such was their skill as artisans, that out of a bowl made by their teacher, they carved out three more. This was done on a promise from the gods, of admission into their sacred ranks, and they were accordingly admitted into the heavenly society. The people prayed them thus :—

"Yaydēvaso abhavata sukrutya syenah iva id adhivinis-  
dhe teratnam dhātasava sōnapatah sandhanvānah  
abhavata amrutäsah."

"Ye who have, by your own wonderful skill an arts become gods and are living in heaven as sons of industry, we pray ye give us riches."

"Ribhavo vai devesu tapasa soma pitam abhya jayam."

"The Ribhu, by virtue of their austere asceticism, won the privilege of sipping soma nectar in the society of Gods."  
(Aitiriya Brahmana.)

Referring to Ribhu, Prajapati thus addresses Twashtar :—  
"Tava vai ime antevāsas ēva ebhīḥ sampi basva."  
(Aitiriya Brahmana.)

"These are thy pupils, thou also with these thy pupils, mayest sip Soma Nectar (with us)."

Such was the respect paid to the members of this Visvavarma Caste in days gone by. When the gods themselves admitted the Visvakarmans into their exalted ranks, and treated them as gods, and when the people themselves accepted them as such and prayed them for riches, what need is there for one to weary oneself in discovering additional evidence from the Vedas in proof of the nobility of their caste? What, however, is the recognised status of Twashtar, the prince of artisans, of Twashtar who surpassed Tubal Cain of the Jews, Hepaistos of the Greeks, and Vulcan of the Romans, of that Twashtar who was admitted into the sacred company of the gods to sip Soma Nectar, and whose son Visvarupa was the priests of the Gods? Why the Sudra Wellalas call him Tattar in utter derision, as a person of no consequence, a low caste fellow unworthy of any notice. Comment is needless.

The word "Badal" is a derivative from Pali, meaning a "Treasurer." The word "Achari" is of Sanskrit origin and it means a "Teacher," both are terms conveying very honourable significations, but such is the force of concerted action on the part of the Govi in Ceylon, to subvert the status of the Visvakarmans, the Govi on whose social rise and pro-

gress we mean to make a passing observation in these pages, that the terms "Badal" and "Achari" are now forced to have a base import, that to work in precious metals is an infamous occupation, but to wallow in the mud and cultivate the soil an honourable trade. Can prejudice of faction and enmity of caste any further go? One circumstance, however, is worthy of notice, namely, that no hostile critic has ever attempted to degrade the Visvakarmans to the rank of Sudrayas.

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF THE GOVI CASTE OF CEYLON.

The student of the history of the Sinhalese people cannot but be struck with the marvellous rise of the people of the Govi Caste in Ceylon. During the reigns of the Manu kings of the Island, the prodigious energy of that class of people so prominent towards the close of the Sinhalese rule, was abashed and scared away, by the somewhat harsh treatment they experienced at the hands of those stern potentates of the early days of the century. This observation of ours gains considerable support from an inscription graven on a stone slab at Polonnaruwa, at the command of the renowned king Kirti Nissankamalla, who reigned in 1198 A.D.. We would let this important record, of which the following is a tolerably faithful translation, speak for itself.

"Treason against the king is not even to be thought of.  
"Live not without a king. If, therefore, there are no kings,  
"or deputy kings, or princes, let queens govern the land,  
"but wish not for the anti-Buddhistic princes of Chola or  
"Kerala as kings for the Island of Lanka, the property of  
"Buddha. Traitors are they who revolted with them.  
"As the crow compares not with the swan, nor the ass with  
"the steed, nor the worm with the cobra, nor the fire-fly with  
"the sun, nor the snipe with the elephant, nor the jaikal  
"with the lion, desire not a Govi for a ruler. Be they ever  
"so powerful, admit not the Govi to fill posts of trust in the

"state. They and their clan would bow and cringe, but give "one of them a situation, and traitor would he prove to be. "If one of the royal descent mixes with them, his head is struck off from the neck. Select, therefore, a descendant from Wijayo's royal line for king and preserve him as you would the eye of your body."

This is strong language in an inscription. What the circumstance was that impelled a prince of such renown, to communicate permanence to an edict, fraught with such disaster to the incipient aspirations of a strong section of his people; it is impossible to say; but that it had root in some violent agitation on the part of a powerful Govi cabal, which perilled the security of the king's throne there cannot be any doubt, otherwise the monarch's ire is inexplicable. The hint conveyed by the first sentence of the edict perhaps affords the reason. Whatever that may be that this harsh royal injunction was rigorously enforced even during several of the subsequent reigns may well be taken for granted, for from the time of its promulgation down to the end of the 15th century we hear little or nothing of the Govi.

From the commencement of the 15th century the influence of the Wellala Tamils of Madura began seriously to colour the Govi society of Ceylon, and made itself felt even amongst the royal circles of the country. Tamil names, Tamil customs, Tamil manners became the order of the day. The name of Rajasinha, the first, was Tikiri Banda, and both Banda and Rajasinha are words of pure Tamil origin. Rajasinha was a frightful parricide, who, to wipe off his earthly existence, embraced Hinduism. The priests of Siva held out to the penitent king what the priests of Buddha could not, a free pardon for his appalling crime. That was clearly the outcome of Tamil priestcraft, and it roused the irate despot to declare a war of extermination against the religion and priesthood of Buddha.

By priesthood of Buddha, we mean to designate the entire class of the yellow-robed gentry, who, it is pretended, have renounced this sinful world, and its allurements to lead lives of holiness in order to sunder the fetters of "Tanha," the

proximate cause of reincarnation, and to enter Nirvana, which is a state of passive and passionless existence, somewhere between birth and death, parking of the nature neither of the one, nor of the other.

This priesthood as it now exists in Ceylon, is divided into three sects—the Seamese, the Amarapura and the Ramañña. Amongst these three sects there is no radical difference as far as their religious tenets are concerned, but as regards the manner in which the sacred robe is damped there is a difference, for the Siamese sect always covers one shoulder only, whereas the Ramañña and Amarapura sects are on some occasions, compelled to cover both. The latter method is the rule, but the former is an innovation supposed to have been grafted by royal command, as a mark for distinguishing the priests of the Govi Caste from the priests of other castes. There is another difference, a more glaring and shameless difference, which is a palpable outcome of the impertinence of caste. It is this, that when the other two sects admit into their ranks men of other castes without discrimination, the Siamese sect tolerates none but a Govi, a palpable transgression of the spirit and letter of the benignant and equitable laws of the holy man, who though a prince of the highest caste himself, was desirous of killing this Hydra-headed evil by the adoption of a mendicant's life and garb, and a mendicant's degradation. But his attempts have all been futile. Of all the people of Ceylon, no class persists more in the observance of the foolish distinctions of caste, than the Buddhist priests of the Govi Caste of Ceylon, be they priests of the Siamese, the Amarapura, or of the Ramañña sect. That baneful institution would have long ago been wiped off from the face of existence, and the Ceylonese would have been a united people, but for the existence of these ancient degenerated fossils, who stick to caste with all the fervour and vehemence of religious fanaticism. Little did the sage of Kapilavastu think of the multitude of sins, which his revered robe would be prostituted to mask. Under the cloak and cover of mendicants, whose yellow robe is a snare to be unwary, some of those priests have shown the

selves to be frightful fiends of iniquity. Crimes of nearly every description have been perpetrated by many a member of this sacerdotal tribe. It is high time that some ecclesiastical law were promulgated to govern these irrepressible and irresponsible human beings, who, if left uncontrolled much longer, would bring their order and their religion into utter disrepute and disgrace.

To resume our narrative, which the fascination of a digression deferred for a few moments, the diffusion of Tamil manners and customs throughout the Island was destined to bring disaster to the kingdom. It made the country suffer the greatest calamity which it had ever experienced, and which ultimately worked its ruin. We mean the fall of its crown into the hands of the Waddiga Tamils of Madura. It arose in this wise. Narendra Sinha was the last king of the Sinhalese race. Current history is that his wife was a Tamil princess of Madura. Whatever may be the historical chronicle, the oral tradition absolutely denies royal descent to Narendra Sinha's wife. The popular story connected with this lady is that she was a Tamil woman of Sudra Wellala extraction, palmed off upon the peerless credulity of Narendra Sinha's ambassadors, as a genuine royal maid of spotless Kshatriya descent. Moreover, she seems to have led a life of very questionable morality, while she was at Madura, but whether it was owing to the proverbial influence which the wife exercises over the husband, or it was owing to her resistless personal charms, perhaps it was due to both, Narendra Sinha entirely condoned his wife's youthful indiscretions, and let her soft influence have its sway over him. She had a brother by the name of Suppiah Naiker, towards whom Narendra Sinha himself developed a brotherly affection. It is a common saying that when a man dives he trusts the rope's end not to his own brother, but to his wife's brother. It is difficult to explain the anatomy of this extraordinary physiological hold, but there it is, and Narendra Sinha before his death handed over the reins of government to his brother-in-law Suppiah Naiker, who ascended the throne of Ceylon by the imposing title of

Sri Wijaya Raja Sinha. A Tamil man of Madura, Suppiah Naiker brought all his likes and dislikes, into the kingdom which fortune threw in his way. From his accession to the throne of Ceylon, there arose a period, which not only beheld the downfall within six and seventy years of a rule, which had successfully resisted Time's ravaging scythe for three and twenty centuries, but witnessed also the rise and progress of a caste, which by the impulse imparted to it, within that period has, despite royal edicts and royal orders by leaps and bounds risen, to a position, which is at once the envy and wonder of the other castes of the Island. We mean the Govi of Ceylon. When we reflect the prodigious exertions which this caste had to make to rise to the eminent social position it holds today, we cannot repress the sense of admiration which such energies challenge.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

##### THE DOWNFALL OF THE VISVAKARMANS.

It would not be out of place here to inquire a little into the status of the Visvakarmans in the Sinhalese society, both during the splendour and the decadence of the native Kings of the Island, and at the beginning of the European conquest of it:

In the times of the kings of the Mahawansa or the Manuwansa, of whom Mahasen was the last, the Visvakarmans had all their rights and privileges preserved to them intact. Their claim to a high caste was fully recognised. It was their birth-right descended as they are from Manu and his brothers. Even during the reign of Dutugemunu's great rival Elala, a prince of the Chola Dynasty, which traces its origin to the same Manu, a forefather of the Visvakarma caste, the Visvakarmans were in the height of their prosperity. They had their own city Mantotte, and their own kings of their own caste reigned there; but from the commencement of the low Tamil influence, on

the social circles of Ceylon, the social position of the Visvakarmans ebbed and waned. That was not at all strange, for the Wellala Tamils of Madura could not possibly profess much friendship for a class of people who, claiming themselves to be the real original Brahmins presented so strenuous an opposition to the Go-Brahmins of Madura. And the Vellalas, who are they but the servants of the servants of the Go-Brahmins of India.

In the Sinhalese society of the great Rajasinha's reign, coloured as that society was, by the Tamil element from Madras, the Visvakarmans were forced to the second rank in the order of castes then obtained in the Kandyan Provinces. That that was the order then recognised, may well be accepted, when we remember the support it receives from the accounts of impartial and disinterested historians of alien climes. Armour's Grammar of the Kandyan Law, Knox's History of Ceylon, Rebeiro's Chronicles, men whose veracity as historians is above all suspicion, all agree in assigning the second place to the Visvakarmans, the first being assigned to the Christian Banacas and the clergy. In proof of this we would quote a passage from Rebeiro. Having spoken of the nobility and clergy he says, "Then follow the Chitties, which class comprehends goldsmiths and other workmen who make use of the hammer. The Banacas or nobles may enter the houses of the Chitties, but they do not eat with them, nor can marriages be contracted between their children, but the Chitties may sit down in the presence of Banacas which men of an inferior rank may not do." This passage affords strong evidence from an impartial historian, of the recognised position of the Visvakarmans in the Sinhalese society of the time of Rajasinha the First. They were then styled the "Chitties," a word of Sanskrit origin, the radical meaning of which is "noble." And they were honoured with a rank second only to that of Banacas, the nobles, and the clergy, but second to no other caste or class, and in no way second to the Govi. Now contrast this unprejudiced historical chronicle by a disinterested alien, with the biased and jaundiced accounts in the Nitinighanduwa, de Saram's

description of castes, Kehelpannala's Ehelapola, Casichetty Appendix to the Ceylon Gazetteer, and Catiresu's Handbook to the Jaffna Peninsula. The first of these disputable productions gives the Visvakarmans the third rank, the second and third consign them to the fourth class, but the fourth and the fifth hurl them down to perdition by including them amongst the menial servants of the Sudra Vellala. When did this signal revolution take place, this social cataclysm which degraded the Visvakarmans from the neighbourhood of the nobles to the vicinity of the ignobles? The change from the position of a Chetty to that of menial servant, of a Sudraya, is a prodigious mutation, but history tells us nothing of this immense social fall. We for the first time hear of it from the authors whom we have mentioned above, and who are so much known to fame that not two eyes in all Ceylon settle upon them through the revolving year. When it is reflected further that these authors, famous in their own estimation only, are all Vellalas by caste, it will enable the reader to characterise these offensive accounts as false and malicious fabrications of wicked and malignant men leagued to run down the Visvakarmans.

Mr. M. Narayana Sastri, M.A., a most learned Brahmin of Madras, in a letter written to the *Hindoo* of April, 1871 concerning the Visvakarmans, says: "Their trade is as old as the Rig Veda, and they were highly civilized long before the arrival of the Brahmins of India." Mr. Sir Casichetty who wrote the offensive and senseless Appendix to the *Ceylon Gazetteer* in 1833 is now no more. He has gone the way of all flesh himself. In that Appendix he put down the Visvakarmans amongst the domestic servants of the Vellalas. This view is obviously hostile to the counts given by Rebeiro and Narayana Sastri. What reason was there for including as domestic servants, a class of people, whose honourable "trade is as old as the Rig Veda" and whose civilization dates from a period long anterior to the arrival in India of Vashista and other Brahmins, departed gentleman has not explained. Mr. Katiresu, has, after a lapse of five and seventy years, thought it fit

proper to unearth that offensive Appendix, from the profound oblivion it was reposing in, and give it a fresh lease of life, to the immense vexation of a part of the people of Ceylon, with whom he has cast his lot, and that too at a time when the advanced sons of the soil are making prodigious efforts to eradicate this crying social evil from the soil of the land, must be presumed to know his master's ground for that provoking view. Would he kindly enlighten us how a class of people who brought civilization to India, who invented the art of agriculture, and other arts, and who are called the "Jagat Gurus"—the teachers of the world—have, as he says, come to be the domestic servants of the Sudra Vellalas? A domestic servant is one bound to another called master, to do the menial work in the house of the latter generally for a stipulated monthly payment. A Visvakarman, on the contrary, enters into no such binding contract. He only undertakes to do artistic work and make articles of metal and wood for hire. That is his trade. If, therefore, he pursues his trade in the house of a Vellala, by what force of rational logic could it be said that he is a domestic servant of that Vellala man? The more we reflect on this subject the stronger grows our conviction that Mr. Casichetty and his learned pupil, Mr. Katireshu, have offered the Visvakarmans a gratuitous insult calculated to lower their social position. If there is a caste in Ceylon, the members of which do no menial work, it is the Visvakarma Caste.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE GOVI AND THE WELLALA.

It is a source of great pride to the Visaakarmans that amongst them there are no appus, no ayahs, no coolies, no carters, no pingo carriers, no grave diggers, no cooks, and no rickshawalias. All this gentry is recruited from the ranks of the Govi.

It is the easiest thing imaginable to write a book and insert in it a remark fraught with insult to the status of any

caste in society, but not one of these thoughtless men could cite any passage from any book of recognised authority in support of the position they have advanced and assigned to the Visnakarmans. Different, entirely different, is the case with regard to the Govi and the Vellalas. A prodigious array of nearly one hundred books of undoubted authority, such as 1, Purana Namawaliya; 2, Piummala; 3, Ruanmala; 4, Kavyalakshana manimalawa; 5, Kavyakantapasa; 6, Warahamihira, &c., put down the Govi as Sudrayas. Nearly all the Indian authorities, with the single exception of the Chudamani Nighandu, include the Vellalas in the same category. The Govi of Ceylon and the Vellalas of India are people of one and the same caste. They are Sudrayas pure and simple, whose hereditary occupation is the cultivation of paddy, an occupation condemned by Manu for its inherent baseness. There are seven classes of Vellalars in India. They are Conday Katti Vellalar, Thuluwa Vellalar, Chaina Vellalar, Naththimāna Vellalar, Cholia Vellalar, Pandi Vellalar, and Malayaman Vellalar. There are three classes of Vaisyas, Go-vaisya, Bhu-vaisya and Dhana-vaisya. All these vaisyas including Vellalars, according to Winslows' Dictionary, are Sudrayas. On the other hand such an imputation cannot rationally be brought against the Visvakarmans. There is no book of recognised authority which has put down the Visvakarman as a Sudraya. The authorities cited in some of the previous pages of this book give them, on the contrary, the position of real original Brahmins, mentioned in the Vedas. The Visvakarmans could, with greater reason, claim the Govi and the Vellalas as their menial servants employed to cultivate their fields, as is really the case in some villages such as Nilawala and Mangalagama.

This observation is advanced not with any unworthy intention of causing any bitterness to the sensibilities of our countrymen the Govi and the Vellalas. It is not our purpose to demolish the pretensions of one caste and rise on the ruins of it. The purity of our intentions will not be sullied by any such unworthy motive. Our remark is simply made to repel the unjust and absurd insinuation of Mr. Katireshu

of Jaffna, that the Visvakarmans are the domestic servants of the Vellatas, an insinuation so damaging to the social position of the Visvakarmans. With all his learning Mr. Katiresu appears to us to be a very rigid fossil as far as his foolish notions of caste are concerned, but we doubt not that once he knows, by the perusal of the books we have indicated, that the Vellatas have no pretensions whatever to the title of a high caste, he will join us in our endeavour to eradicate this crying social evil from our land.

We must tarry a moment here, to disabuse the minds of our countrymen the Govi, and knock out of them the absurd idea that they are the descendants of the ancient Banacas, whom Rebeiro describes as the nobles. Who these Banacas were it is not quite clear. To what nation they belonged history does not tell us. The sound of the name supports the conjecture that they were a race of Indians. All that we definitely know of them is that they were a sect of Christians, probably Roman Catholics, and were engaged in the cultivation of paddy. The similarity that exists between the occupation of the Govi and that of the Banacas gives no warrant to the assertion that they were one and the same people. Besides the difficulty of religion, for Christianity planted by the Portuguese was hardly acceptable to the Govi of Ceylon, the Banaas had no existence in Ceylon during the reign of Kirti Nissankamalla, but the Govi were then a recognised class of people, who by some act of perfidy incurred that renowned Monarch's displeasure, which culminated in the promulgation of the graven edicts to preclude that turbulent people from all offices of State. It can by no means be said with reason that the Banacas arose from the Govi or the Govi from the Banacas. The large number of books which speak of the Govi and Sudrays, make no mention of the Banacas at all, and the enormous disparity that exists between these two people, in respect of caste, points to the conclusion that the Banacas were people of a distinct race, who settled down in Ceylon at the Commencement of the Portuguese invasion of the Island.

The Govi of Ceylon are not Aryans by race. They are

the remnants of the Yakkas, the aborigines of Ceylon, whom the Rig Veda describes as the "Dasas or Dasyus." They were the native population that resisted the Aryan advance, and took the cultivation of the soil, when defeated. (Vide Kunte's *Vicissitudes of Aryan Civilization, and the Historian's History.*)

The purpose that animates us in the present venture ours is two-fold. The first is to try to regain by all legitimate means, the once prominent but now indifferent, social position of the Visvakarmans, and the second and more important one is to expose the folly of observing the meaningless distinctions of caste, to warn the Ceylonese of the danger resulting to the nation from the observance of it, and then through that channel to strike a blow on that monster evil.

If Ceylonese wish to advance from their present barbarous state, they can hope to succeed only by the annihilation of these absurd social differences which effectively preclude all social commerce. Mutual revilings are, in their nature, destructive to all union and concerted action. Surely our countrymen do not need a moral to be drawn from the fables of Æsop to instil into their minds the wisdom of that trite old adage that union is strength.

The Govi of Ceylon do not appear to us to be in the least animated, by the lofty wish of ameliorating the condition of their countrymen, who in point of civilization are perilously near barbarians. Their sole object is the selfish one of self-aggrandisement, at the expense of other caste. This has been the rule of their conduct for nearly a century past, and judging from the tenor of some of their recent publications, it is most likely that they will pursue this destructive policy of theirs for some years longer. It is high time indeed that this important section of our countrymen discovered, that it does not require much sagacity to perceive that the principle of their conduct is based upon a very grave error of policy. It is immensely calculated to alienate the affection of the other people of the Island from them, and make national regeneration a remote contingency.

The five gentlemen, who wrote these books, running down the Visvakarmans and some of their countrymen, are all Vellalas. They begin their books with a puff direct on their own caste, and place it at the head of all the other castes. This, no doubt, is a fundamental weakness common nearly to every caste, which pretends to a high descent, but to puff up a caste and to claim a high descent for it, in the teeth of all recognised authorities, which deny to it any such distinction, exhibits a face, which for its unblushing audacity and brazen impudence seldom finds a parallel.

Had these gentlemen known aught of that literature, which treats on castes, they would have paused ere they took upon themselves the delicate task of assigning positions to the different castes of the Island, a task, the vicious performance of which, by those unqualified men, has caused unmixed pain to the Visvakarmans, that when no class of people in Ceylon could authoritatively show a better title to nobility of descent.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE FOUR CASTES.

Every classification of the various castes of the Island into their proper positions must be founded upon some rational principle. It must adopt, for its guidance, the opinions of the acknowledged authorities on the subject, and it should award to each caste the position which those authorities have always assigned to it. Any classification which is not constructed upon such lines, but which pursues its own wayward course and allots ranks as caprice would suggest and capricious partiality would dictate, must of necessity be erroneous and deceptive in the extreme.

We have ourselves given below a table showing the position of each caste. In constructing that list we have let ourselves be entirely guided by the opinion of men learned in

the subject, and by authority unquestionable.

All castes are divided into four classes. They are the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas, the Vaisyas and the Sudras. These four castes are supposed to have sprung from Brahma's person in the following order, the Brahmins from his mouth, the Kashtriyas from his arms, the Vaisyas from his thighs, and the Sudras from his feet. The following quotation on the point is from Yajur Veda:—

“Brahmanösyā Mukhamāsit  
“Bāharājanyah Krutah,  
“Urutadasya yad Vaisyah  
“Padbhyan Sudrōwajaytāh.”

“The Brahmins arose from the mouth, the Kings from his hands, the Vaisyas from his thighs and the Sudras from his feet.”

Manu says that the body of man is impure below the omphalos. This condemnation of so essential a part, of the human frame, is perhaps due to the unfortunate circumstance of its possessing the seat of dishonour. The parts, however, situated above that sign of the placental mammal are held to be pure. The physical frame is thus divided into two parts, the upper or the pure, the lower or the impure, with omphalos as the boundary. The face, moreover, is held to be purer than the hands, the hands than the thighs, and the things than the feet, consequently the castes which sprang from these various parts naturally received their congenital character, that is to say in other words, he Brahmin who rose from the face of the God is held to be purer than the Kshetriya who sprang from his hands. The Kshetriya on his part, for similar reason, claims superiority over the Vaisya, and the Vaisya for a like ground, over the Sudra. The purity of birth is obviously the principle of selection. The first place then, in the order of birth and purity must doubtless fall to the lot of the Brahmin. He is called the lord of the creation, and on that ground also he is clearly entitled to that distinction.

The five-faced God Visvakarmaya was, according to Mulasthambha, the creator of the world. From his five faces arose his five sons: Manu, Maya, Twashtar, Silpi and Visvagna. These were the Pancha or the five Brahmins mentioned in the Rig Veda, and they were the ancestors of the Visvakarmans or the Navandanno are therefore Brahmins by birth, and as such they are naturally entitled to the first place or precedence in any social circle. The Go-Brahmins of the present day have absolutely no claim to such a title. Their ancestors were not descended from Brahma's face. The fifteen Rishis from whom they claim descent were of very low and mean birth.

The construction of the second class cannot present any difficulty. It includes kings and their descendants only. The class third is in some danger of being usurped by the Sudrays. It must only include the trading caste. The words Bhu-vaisya, Go-vaisya and Dhanalvaisya are barbarisms. They have the impress and odour of Vellala coinage in them, disclosing obvious attempts to enter into the third class of the castes, but their endeavours must be all in vain, because all the authorities on the subject agree that these Vaisyas and the Vellalas are Sudrayas by caste.

The fourth class consists of those who are born of the feet of Brahma. The Govi of Ceylon, the Vellales of India, and all the other castes who do menial work, and pursue offensive employments, come within this class. They are the descendants of the non-Aryan aborigines of the land who resisted the Aryan aborigines of the land who resisted the Aryan advance.

The following classification is deduced from the foregoing facts and opinions:—

#### I. The Brahmins:—

The Visva Brahmins or Navandannos are also known as Dewa Brahmins, Dewa Kammalars, Kammalars, Kamasales, Panchalas, Tarachcha and Silpi

and include "Achari," "Wadu," "Loguru," "Badal." Under the head "Achari" come Blacksmiths, Fitters and all those who work in iron. "Wadu" includes, Carpenters, Architects, and workers in wood. "Loguru" are Braziers and Coppersmiths. "Galwadu" are Stone masons and Sculptors. "Badal" is derived from a word meaning a treasurer and includes Gold and Silver Smiths, Engravers and Jewellers.

#### II. The Kshatriyas:—

The Kings and their descendants, extinct in Ceylon.

#### III. The Vaisyas:—

The trading caste. All those who do not belong to the first, second and fourth classes, extinct.

#### IV. The Sudrays or the Govi which class includes the rest.

By this classification, we do not intend to cause offence to the sensibilities of our countrymen, the Govi. Their diligence and their industry have added materially to the wealth and prosperity of the country. But with these stirring qualities, they now and then entertain some foolish notions with regard to their birth, notions which they actively employ to the great injury of the other castes. This circumstance has, most unfortunately, kindled a spirit of retaliation in others, and has called forth a correct statement of the facts with regard to the several castes. Here is this classification. It is a materialised deduction from authorities on the subject, and it plainly knocks the bottom out of the pretensions of many of them, and gives to others their legitimate positions. We are sure that this will tell some of our countrymen wisdom enough, not to draw public attention to subjects which escape notice, only when they pass without observation.

which the Mudaliyars and Muhandirams of different castes should wear is equally absurd and highly offensive. No rational principle seems to have guided that vain-glorious man in that senseless distribution. To the first glance, it appears to be the unreflecting work of fancy and caprice only. According to that division it is only Mudaliyars of his caste that have the right to wear gold, velvet and silver. The Visvakarmans who discovered gold, and whose hereditary occupation is to work in gold, have, it seems, no right to wear golden ornaments. Like their menial servants, the washers, they are only entitled to wear bone buttons and silver loops. It is strange that such unblushing audacity should have escaped merited castigation.

This offensive book has, we are told, again been printed for circulation amongst the Government officials. Our observations will, we hope, enable those officials to pronounce upon it the condemnation it deserves.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### WIJAYO THE FIRST KING OF LANKA WAS A VISVA BRAHMĀN.

The primitive Aryans of the Vale of Iran, the home of their genesis, knew of no such offensive distinction as caste. They were all of one grade by birth. In course of time, however, some ages after their historic exodus from their paternal domicile, when mortal sins first began to invade their simple unsophisticated minds, a distinction arose, but it was a distinction of colour only and not of caste; white, red, yellow and black answering to the four great divisions, the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas, the Vaisyas and the Sudras respectively, the charm of colour being the principle that influenced the choice. It was these distinctions of colour that were afterwards revolutionized into what is now known as caste, where birth and not colour is the dividing line. The former distinction had some sense in it, but the latter is devoid of all meaning and is offensive in the bargain.

The former had a tangible superiority, being founded upon physical grace and beauty, but the latter is a delusion, a dream of unsettled brains. Yet this distinction exists, and it has existed for thousands of years.

On the full moon day of the month of Wesak, of the Kaliyuga year 2558, the day on which the great Buddha departed this life, Wijayo landed in Ceylon with some seven hundred followers. The ruler of the Island at that time was Kueni. History gives no description of her personal charms. If the Veddas of the present day are the descendants of the Yakkos, over whom Queni ruled and of whom she herself was one, we cannot give much for her lilies and roses. She could by no means have been a captivating houri. One unique extraordinary physical feature she however possessed which never graced the frame of any other woman, either in the ancient or in the modern world. For whereas the anterior regions of the thoraxes of ordinary women are adorned by the presence of two breasts only, this extraordinary woman of antiquity had three, the supernumerary lobe being placed between the other two. Whether this unique feature was a mark of physical beauty or a constitutional deformity, it is difficult to say, but it was predicted by men learned in the stars that the moment she should set her eyes upon the man destined to be her future lord and master, the redundant central excrescence would disappear from her frame.

Neither has history given any account of the subjective graces of the young royal spark Wijayo. All that we know of him is that he was a fire-eater of his father's dominions, and that, to rid himself of his unruly son and his vicious companions who were reprobates no less, the old king put them all into some ships and pushed them off into the Indian Ocean to seek their fortunes in whatever country or clime chance might cast them on. It was sheer luck that directed them into Lanka's shores. Queni, the Island's ruler, at the time, was apprised of the arrival of these unknown aliens. She did not know who they were, but the sudden disappearance from her frame the superabundant central

breast, the moment her eyes caught sight of the royal swain, revealed to her in what capacity the prince would stand to her in future. There was the realisation of the astrological prediction, and Wijayo's conquest of Queni was complete.

The Laggala Yakkos, however, over whom Queni reigned, shewed certain amount of resistance, but the prince, with the help of his consort gave them a crushing defeat and firmly established himself in the Island. Queni bore him two children, a son and a daughter, named Jewahaththa and Disala, whom he afterwards discarded. Their mother experienced a similar treatment at the hands of the cruel and ungrateful prince.

Wijayo was the first king of Ceylon of the royal race of Manu, and as such he was a Visva Brahmin. Along with him there came over to Ceylon from India five noblemen of the Visvakarma Caste. They were Sirith Prakrama Radala, Sirith Narayana Radala, Sirith Abhiseka Radala, Sirith Pon Arasarana Radala and Sirith Devanarayana Radala. They were the lineal descendants of a line of Deva Brahmins of the Visvakarma Caste, who crowned Manu, one of the five great ancestors of the Visvakarmans. It was these five Visvadeva Acharies, whose names we have mentioned above, that crowned Wijayo and his consort, and the king in recognition of their services gave to them in marriage five noble ladies of the Visvadeva Caste, who accompanied the Pandava Princess from Madura.\* Amongst the villages given to them by the king were Kadupiliya, Kammal Thota, Notambuwa, Wewagama, Nimmagala and Aiwandama. It would be foreign to our purpose to state here what the things were which the king of Madura sent to Wijayo as presents, but this much may be mentioned, that the people that accompanied the Pandava princess to Ceylon were all Silpies, or people of the Visvakarma Caste. This circumstance itself is amply sufficient to establish the fact that the Visvakarmans are people of a noble descent.

\*The Kurunegala Vistaraya describes them as descendants of a line of Pundits who had crowned seven thousand seven hundred and seven Latchchevi Kings of Visalamahanuwara in India.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### SCIENTIFIC AND ARTISTIC WORK.

The Silpies in Ceylon are generally known as Goldsmiths, Acharies or Navandannos. The radical meaning of the latter word connotes an ability at invention, a faculty to devise new articles of art. They are also called Swarnakara in Pali, Swarnakara in Sanskrit, both signifying workers in gold. Karmara, Kammala and Tarachcha are likewise names for them. In India they are also styled Panchalas in Sanskrit. They also have the name "Kriavahh" "Kriavahhitihā vaipura Panchalan avyaksate." (Satapata Brahmana.) Manu mentions the names of the districts in which they lived. They were Kurukshtera, Matsya, Panchala and Surasenaka. (Manu II, 19).

What was the state of the Tarachcha Caste in the times of the Emperor Asoka? When the princess Sankhamitta, the Emperor's daughter brought to Ceylon the branch from the sacred Bo tree at Buddhagaya, she was accompanied by eighteen of Devatha caste, eight of Brahmin caste, eight of Kelambi caste, eight of Gopaka caste, eight of Tarachcha caste and eight of kalinga caste. The eight Tarachcha Pandits were—1, Sirith Taralna Radala; 2, Sirith Pon Taralna Radala; 3, Sirith Lena Radala; 4, Sirith Narayana Radala; 5, Sirith Ubhaya Narayana Radala; 6, Maha Neketh Radala; 7, Vidya Chakravarti Pandita Radala; and 8, Sirith Manwickrama Radala. These Tarachcha Pandits were as their names indicate, all noblemen, the lineal descendants of Manu and his brothers.

Apart from the evidence appended by the names of these Pundits whom the great Asoka sent in the company of his pious daughter, engaged as she was in the sacred mission of conveying the branch of a tree the most revered in existence, a mission designed moreover to serve the dual purpose of pleasing a great king and of propagating a religion, which the great Emperor had professed despite the frown of his own countrymen, the Tarachcha caste was rad-

"Badal" and "Tarahal" are two of the words which the caste... "Kalingu," says... "is... the Kalingu... and that the Tarahal caste is a chief reliable caste equally high and equally respected as the Kalingu." This is an impartial opinion founded upon strong evidence. Now contrast this with the paraphrase given to the word "Tarahal" occurring in the 171 and 175 stanzas of the Kusa Jataka, edited by two Sinhalese men, and the extent to which human spite can go, when fanned up by the spite of caste, is at once perceived. Of the two editors one is a Mudaliyar, with some pretension to a fair share of external polish, and some learning, but the form of the word selected by him to convey the meaning of the term "Tarahal," is so offensive to good sense and so exceedingly abhorrent to refined taste, that it at once convicts him of studied insult, and discloses to the world that his outward polish is but a false superficial veneer, hardly answerable to any inward refinement.

The term "Badal" is a derivative from Pali, and it originally meant a treasurer. As treasurers in ancient times were all Visvakarmans, that term came to be applied to designate the caste from the transfer of meaning by the association of ideas. It has, however, like many other words in other languages, such as "Knave" and "villain" in English, lost its radical and honourable signification, and has now been forced to assume an opprobrious sense. Just as "Handuruwa," "Kewula" and 'Haliya' are in these forms highly offensive to the several castes indicated by them, so those words "Badal" and "Tarahal" in the forms "Badala" and "Tarahaluwa" are simply calculated to insult the members of the caste indicated by the words. There is no class of people on the face of this earth who have a greater number of names applicable to them than the people of the Visvakarma caste. Visva Brahmins, Deva Brahmins, Deva Kammalars, Kamsala, Panchala, Silpi, Jagatguru, Kammala, Tarachcha, Tarahal, Swarnakara, Rankaru, Nawandanno, &c., are some of them. When there are so many inoffensive words to convey the occupation of the man and the caste to which he belonged without any

offence, what could have possessed this Mudaliyar, apparently humble and harmless, to have selected a very offensive one for his purpose, and caused unnecessary pain to the other members of that caste is not easily discernible. It cannot be attributed to any venial inadvertence on the part of the Mudaliyar, because he has used the word "Tarahal" in the 179th stanza also in a similar sense. It is not that the context demanded a use of the obnoxious form of the words because the poet simply meant a goldsmith generally, and not one with a depraved moral character. In fact, the poet meant a very distinguished goldsmith challenging respect. The two words "Badal" and "Tarahal" just as "Handuru," "Kewul," 'Hali,' &c., are perfectly harmless in themselves, but it is the fixture of the vowel "a" to the end of each word that makes its signification so very repulsive to one's mind. The Mudaliyar well knowing the change of sense which the affixed vowel must effect, has without any provocation offered a most gratuitous insult to a class of people who have done nothing to deserve it, and whose only fault is that they claim descent from the God Visvakarma, a circumstance which has unfortunately formed a source of irritation to the other castes. If, therefore, this aspersion of the caste at the hands of the Mudaliyar is unprovoked, then the rationale of his conduct can only be found in an innate depravity of soul of deriving gratification from the tortures of others, a very congenial avocation, indeed, with some people. As for the other editor we say nothing about him. If the Mudaliyar is found wanting, when weighed in the scales of impartiality and uprightness, what need is there to speak of the other? Both are equally guilty. Had they paused for a moment and reflected on the fact that their own castes are not invulnerable, that they are not themselves free from the taunts and jeers of others, they would perhaps have discreetly refrained from the unwise practice of maligning another caste. It is strange that men apparently civil should be guilty of so much rudeness and bad taste!

Till recently, it has been the baneful practice of the Govi Caste people to despise the pursuit of the Visvakar-

mans, being under the delusion, perhaps, that their own occupation is a noble one. To wield the hammer was a great disgrace, and to handle the file a dishonour no less. This aspersion is of a trade, of which the great Buddha thus speaks :—

“Bahu Sachchancha Sippanca  
“Vinayocha susikkhito  
“Subhasitacha Yavacha  
“Etan Mangala Muttaman.”

“To have fair knowledge of the mechanical arts, and of the rules of propriety and correct conduct, and to engage in refined and fascinating conversation, are as good as a great blessing.”

It may well be observed here that the rise of the Govi and the fall of the Acharies, and the consequent decline of art in Ceylon were the calamities that wrought its ultimate ruin.

With the purity and the nobility of the Visvakarman's art, the work of the tiller or the craft of the fisher has no possible comparison. The occupation of the cultivator is condemned by Manu, as base in character (Manu X,84), and that of the fisher needs only simple mention to earn for it its deserved damnation; but such is the power of combination and faction, that now to work in gold and silver is an ignoble pursuit, while to wallow in the mud and till the soil, to brave the seas and net for fish are quite genteel vocations. Really logic is not necessary to confute that which carries refutation on its face.

## CHAPTER XIX

### SAKYAMUNI ATCHUNDA'S MANSION

In ancient times the people of the Visvakarma Caste were treated with great respect by men of note. During the

lifetime of Buddha, there lived in the city of Pawa a celebrated Visvakarman called Chunda. He was a Kelambi in wealth, that is to say, a multi-millionaire. Chunda was at first a Sivite, but having heard the Sakya Sage preach, he embraced Buddhism. How did the Sakya Prince address Chunda? In the parlance reserved for addressing men of humble origin? In the language used in speaking to men of inferior castes? Far from it. The holy sage saluted Chuna as “ayusmat,” and that was and still is a term used in addressing men eminent in caste and station only.

Chunda invited Buddha and five hundred of his disciples to a morning meal at his mansion. The food was served in golden bowls, of which one was stolen by an invited priest. One course specially prepared for Buddha was a dish of “Sookara.” He ate of it and contracted acute diarrhoea, which proved fatal. As to what “Sookara” was there is much controversy. The popular acceptation is that it was the flesh of a young porker. The ridiculous idea of a Buddha dying by eating pork gave the Christian camp occasion for many a good jest at the expense of the holy man. We are, however, unable to accept the correctness of the popular version for several reasons. Chunda was at first a Brahmin. To him pigs and pork were, therefore, repulsive things, the very touch whereof producing contamination necessitating purification. The rhetoric of the sage afterwards converted Chunda into Buddhism, the very first precept of which prohibits killing of every description; and to eat the flesh of an animal specially killed for one involves a transgression of the precept by the eater for whom it was intended. It may, therefore, be safely presumed that Chunda being a new proselyte was strict in the observance of its precepts, and he would neither have killed a pig, nor have offered its flesh to Buddha, to whom it would have been repulsive and prohibitive. What then was ‘Sookara’. It was a kind of very rare mushroom called “Indalolu,” esteemed a great delicacy. We adhere to this opinion.

## CHAPTER XX

CHUNDA WAS A VISVAKARMAN AND WAS OF THE  
SOORYA WANSA

Professor Rhys Davis is one of the most eminent of the European students of Buddhism. His book on that religion and on the life of its illustrious founder, is a production beyond all praise. It exhibits a clear and comprehensive grasp of the most salient doctrines of that profound and abstruse philosophy. He who wishes to acquire a clear and accurate conception of the principles of Gautama's religion need not go beyond Professor Rhys Davis' Buddhism. But it is a great misfortune that the eminent scholar should have sullied a page of his book by the introduction into it of matter, which was entirely foreign to his subject, which was absolutely unnecessary to this theme, which he might well have avoided, without the remotest peril to the inherent worth of his treatise, and which has most unfortunately caused pain to the sensibilities, of one section, at least, of the people of India and Ceylon. We mean his hurtful remark concerning the caste of Chunda. The learned Professor in the 80th page of his book says "On reaching Pava he (Buddha) is entertained by a goldsmith of that place named Chunda, a man therefore of one of the lower castes." It is not difficult to discover the sense of the Professor's words. What he means is that the Goldsmith caste, to which Chunda had the honour to belong, is a low caste. Professor Rhys Davis is doubtless a savant of great learning, but we refuse to believe that he knows much of that literature which relates to caste and his unwarranted assumption of the lowness of Chunda's descent bears strong testimony to the truth of our remark.

The caste of the Visvakarman is a tolerably fair test for detecting pretenders to knowledge. When a man puts down the caste of the Goldsmith as a low caste, it is a sure sign that he knows little or nothing of that caste or any caste either. We are afraid that the learned Professor's remark, so offensive to the class of people to which Chunda belonged, had root in some such circumstance.

It is not difficult to guess the source from which Mr. Rhys Davis has derived his knowledge with regard to Chunda's caste. The Professor when quite a young man was a Civil Servant of Ceylon. In that capacity he had frequently the occasion to come in contact with many a layman and priest of the Goigama caste, which is the hereditary enemy of the Visvakarman. It may, therefore, be safely presumed that the Professor's impression of Chunda's caste is a result of his experience gained in Ceylon.

We have often perceived the great tenacity of the first impressions formed in the early part of a man's life. They generally have a tendency to permanence. Obsitancy is their peculiar characteristic, and it is only a few courageous men that have the strength of resolution to emancipate their minds from the thraldom exercised by those fatal first impressions.

If the learned Professor should devote a small portion of his precious time to the study of the subject of caste, he would doubtless discover that Chunda of Pava whom he describes a man of a lower caste, and Chunda's guest Buddha, whom he, without hesitation call a high caste man, were both descended from the same source, from that Visvakarmaya the deified progenitor of the Visvakarma Caste, of which Chunda was at that time so distinguished a son.

From Vaivasvata Manu, the great Aryan law-giver of remote antiquity, there arose three royal lines—the Sooryya, the Chola and the Chaluya. Of these three dynasties, the Sooryya is admittedly the highest and from it was descended the Sakya Sage Gautama. But who was Vaivasvata Manu? He was Visvakarmaya's eldest son, who was afterwards selected as king Mahasammata. He was, like Chunda, a smith by caste and trade, and the great Soorya Wansa is the birth-right of that caste, to the members of which the Professor's disparaging remark is calculated to cause boundless pain. A little acquaintance with the ancient literature and folklore, which relate to Chunda's Caste, will enable any one to perceive that the caste of Pava's millionaire is a pure

Brahmin Caste, the highest on earth. We believe that the dissemination of this fact amongst our countrymen will contribute to stifle the feelings of enmity and jealousy which the other castes entertain towards it, and bring about amongst them a conciliation which is all essential to the progress and prosperity of a race.

We acquit Professor Rhys Davis of all studied insult. His remark was a casual observation, an innocent ejeculation, a pardonable obiter dictum, without much reflection.

## CHAPTER XXI

### KING KASTAVAHANA AND DHANVANTARI THE PRINCE OF INDIAN PHYSICIANS WERE VISVAKARMANS

As the Vellalas of India are the hereditary enemies of the Visvakarmans of that country, so that Goigama a section of the Govi of Ceylon are the natural opponents of the Visvakarmans of this country. The Vellalas of India have done much to lower the social position of the Visvakarmans. The Govi and Ceylon have been equally guilty of the perpetration of offences of a like complexion. Inveterate and deeprooted is the antipathy which these two castes bear to each other. Their hatred is ingrained and implacable. This disposition is not singular to those two castes only. It is the common feeling of enmity that exists amongst the several castes of the Island. This is the palpable outcome of the working of the destructive institution of caste, which alienates affection and annihilates social cohesion, a cohesion which is so essential to the progress and the well-being of a nation. Education and education alone is the panacea for this crying evil, which has sapped the fountains of all brotherly feeling amongst the Sinhalese people.

Chunda was not the only Visvakarman that rose to eminence in the ancient world. There was another greater than Chunda in position. We mean the king Kastavahana. He was the architect that built the city of Kokanada of the

Prince Bodhiraja, whose cruelty afterwards drove the carpenter from that city, to the Himalayas, where he reigned under that name "Kasta Vahana" (Dharma Padartha Katha Prehistoric Ceylon in the National Review.)

There was yet another eminent man whose fame world-wide. He was the most prominent figure of the King Wickrama's ministers of state. We mean Dhanvantari the Prince of Indian Physicians. He was a descendant Saudanva Ganam, a pupil of dwashtar.\* Twashtar himself whom the Tamils of India call Tattar, in derision, was no other than Zoroaster, or Zarathustra of the Persians. The descendants of Saudanva Ganam and Ribhuwa Ganam resided in Sindhu, Kerala, Karnad and Palika. It may now be gathered from the foregoing information that Zoroaster the great Persian sage, the author of Zendavesta was Twashtar, one of the five original progenitors of the Visvakarma Tribe.

It has been pointed out in the foregoing pages that the origin of the Visvakarman is purely Brahminical. The following instance taken from the Jataka Katha, lends additional support to the statement:—

\*Twashtar of Twastri whom the Tamils of India call Tattar in derision was an Acharya Brahmin. He was also called Jarat-Twastri, a name which was afterwards corrupted into Zarathustra, the author Zend-Avesta of the Persians. His son Visvarupa was the priest of the Gods. He and Twastri and his disciples the Ribhu, were the only persons entitled to sit with the Gods and drink Soma Nectar. Visvarupa was insulted by Indra. The Gods excluded Indra from partaking of Soma Nectar as a punishment. His subsequent ample apology to Visvarupa regained him the right, but the Kshtriyas over whom Indra reigned lost it forever.

There was at one time a schism amongst the Aryans whom Mazdayasnians were the conservatives. Zarathrus or Twastri was their leader. Gradually he was named Asura Mazda, the prince of the Gods, from Asura, a God and medhista, most intelligent. This Twastri or Twashtar or Zarathustra was one of the progenitors of the Visvakarmans.

In the reign of the King Brahma Datta there existed a carpenter village, outside the precincts of the city. A certain Carpenter Brahmin of that village made carts and earned his livelihood. The words "Carpenter Brahmin" do not mean a Brahmin that pursued the trade of a carpenter for his living. Such a construction is repelled by the context. These words mean a Brahmin, whose hereditary work is carpentry. A similar instance is that mentioned in the famous controversy between the Buddhist priest Nagasena and the Greek King Menander, whence Bharaddwaja who came to cut down the kon-tree is described as a certain Carpenter Brahmin.

## CHAPTER XXII

### CORONATION A SPECIAL PRIVILEGE OF THE VISVAKARMANS

The eight Visvakarma Radalas or noblemen that accompanied the Princess Sanghamitta to Ceylon, with the revered branch of the sacred Bo-tree, were treated with singular kindness by the King Devanampiyatissa. The Pandit Visvakulasekara, who crowned the King Sri Sangabo, was a descendant of one of those Radalas. A most peculiar characteristic of these families was the reluctance to increase and multiply by promiscuous matrimony. They were an exclusive set of people refusing to mix with others. This social peculiarity is strongly manifested by the high families of the Visvakarmans of Ceylon.

When the King Mahalu Prakkrama Bahu wished to be crowned, the line of the eight Tarachcha Radalas had nearly become extinct, and the only lineal descendant of them was a girl of seven years. She was brought up in the King's palace, and in course of time she became the wife of the King and gave birth to a young prince, who was named Abo Pandita. He it was who afterwards crowned the king, his father. In the later history he is known as Pandita Nilame.

The great Prakkrama Bahu, the scholar King of Ceylon,

was crowned by the Pandit Rajasckera. He was a lineal descendant of the Pandita Nilame mentioned above. In recognition of his services, the king gave him eight villages as a present. Pandita Prakrama Bahu gave his own name to the Achari that crowned him, and called him "Prakrama Achari." The 'King Wickrama Bahu, who reigned at Peradeniya, was crowned by four Visvakarma Pandits from Cotta. After the coronation, the King gave each of them a village as a present.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### THE FLIGHT OF THE TOOTH RELIC.

Raja Sinha I, the warrior king of Ceylon, reigned at Sitawaka. While his exploits swell the breast of every loyal Sinhalese man with pride, his cruel deeds fill him with consternation. His adoption of Sivism for his religion was the signal for a crusade against the Buddhistic Monks. He hunted them down to earth, with the ferocity of a sleuth-hound, whenever he could find them. Soma Thero the meek was one of his first victims. History says that the destruction of this holy man roused the wrath of the Gods, who struck the land with a famine. Even the Tooth Relic, it is said, showed its displeasure by leaving its golden abode and taking shelter in a Sapu flower at Mulgampola in Kandy. The king's soldiers seeing the aureola about the revered object, reported the matter to the king. For six days the monarch and his courtiers endeavoured by supplication to the sacred relic to quit its leafy habitation, but their efforts were fruitless. Then there arose a suggestion that the astrologers should be consulted. The men learned in the stars gave out that only a lineal descendant either of the five Visvakula Pandits that came to Ceylon with Wijayo, or of the eight Tarachcha Radalas that accompanied the Princess Sanghamitta, with the Bo-tree, could alone move the Tooth Relic. A proclamation was issued summoning any such to the front. A certain Prakrama Bahu Pandit claiming descent from the second batch presented himself. He made a lotus flower

out of refined gold, proceeded in procession to the tree and made Satya Kriya "That if he were a real descendant of that illustrious line, thence the Tooth Relic may descend to the golden flower." History says that the Pandit had only uttered the words, when to the astonishment of all, the Sacred Relic alighted upon the golden blossom. The king then transferred the sacred object of veneration to its receptacle, got the Pandit to sit down by him, in his own royal carriage, and with his ministers proceeded in procession to the Maligawa, and there deposited the Relic. The king afterwards conducted the Pandit to the palace, and then treated him with that respect which became a man of so exalted a caste. From that day he was known as Palagama Pandit Nilame. (Wijaya Nitiya).

## CHAPTER XXIV

### VISVAKARMA CASTE A VERY HIGH CASTE

The King Akbo ordered the image of Mihindu, the son of Asoka, to be carried by the Visvakarmans only. This was a special mark of respect paid them by the King. The word used in the Mahawansa is "Tarachcha." It is a name for the Visvakarma Caste. Some wrong-headed translators swayed by envy would try to make us believe that the word "Tarachcha" is an error, a sin of transcription, and that Tanrachcha is the correct word. The correction is based, not upon a preponderance of the number of times the suggested word occurs in manuscripts but upon the translator's inability to discover the reason why the word "Tarachcha" was used. "Why should Tarachcha alone remove the image and not others?" cries the scholastic man. The learned translator knew not what occasioned the royal command, but still he would suggest the verbal change, without any reason to warrant it. Quite apart from this view there is one circumstance, which makes the adoption of the suggested change an impossibility, because the substitution of the word Tanrachcha would destroy the grammatical accuracy of the sentence, which the retention of the word already in use

would preserve.

In the year 1798 during the reign of Sri Wickrama Rajasinha, the last unfortunate king of Kandy, Uduwala Gramabhojjaka, a distinguished man of the Visvakarma Caste, held the position of a great Minister of State. Slaves of several castes, flags, cornered hats called Jagalat Toppees, and one hundred and twenty amunams of high and low land were given to him by the king. Nilawala Gramabhojaka was another distinguished man of the same caste. He, too, was held in the highest esteem by the last illustrious monarch of Kandy. Devendra Mulachari was yet another distinguished Visvakarman of the same reign. It was for using a disrespectful word towards the Achari by a certain Govi caste official, of the king's court, that the tongue of the offending man was ordered to be cut off. In passing the harsh sentence, the king was simply guided by the ancient law of Manu, which says that the tongue of a Sudraya guilty of abusing a Brahmin, Kashtriya or a Vaisya, should be liable to that rigorous punishment. The royal order was carried out only in a modified form, by cutting off the end of the offender's tongue, and the unfortunate man survived the ill-fated despatch for many years and up to his dying day suffered from the affliction of a tipless tongue. These instances are, we presume, more than sufficient to support the contention that the Visvakarma Caste which the ignorant essay to run down is a very high caste, absolutely undeserving of the flouts and sneers of other castes.

How long it will take our countrymen to open their eyes to the measureless evils arising out of this great national wrong, caste, we cannot possibly say.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### THE REFORM SOCIETY.

The recent retrograde movement on the part of some of our countrymen, who pretend to have the welfare of the

nation foremost in their minds, has filled us with consternation. It is simply calculated to make the possibility of the disappearance of this great social evil a very remote contingency. Instead of trying to wipe off this national calamity, which has alienated affection among the people of the Island and has pitted one caste against the other, the Reform Society have begun their operations, with attacking what appears to us to be a very trifling matter, a human being's attire. The dress of a man is but a separable accident, and the change of it for a better and more respected one, does by no means alter the nationality of the wearer. Do the reformers mean to say the rejection of the European costume which is gradually undermining the other modes of the country, and is infusing a spirit of commendable independence into the mind of the wearer, and that the adoption, once more, of the vulgar sarong, and heathen sariya, would bring for us a Utopia within measurable distance to eradicate all our national ills? What a day-dream! Take the orthodox costume of the Kandyan gentry.. Is this the dress the Reformers mean to recommend to us for a national costume? Is there any human attire more fantastic and ridiculous than that? In its external appearance is it not perilously near the grotesque habiliment of a clown?

In the infancy of human races decoration preceded dress. The Kandyan costume seems to us to be a relic of this rude ancient habit of the human mind. It is the materialised creation of an imagination disturbed to the roots, and decorated by a fancy run stark mad. Manu says that the physical frame of man is impure below the omphalos. We subscribe to that opinion, despite the protestations of the whole Schematic race, with Abraham at the head, clamouring to save one inexpressible from the sweeping condemnation pronounced by the great Aryan Sage. A dress is a convenient cover to screen the nakedness especially of the nether regions of the human frame. A costume which does not perform that dual duty should be discarded without hesitation. The Kandyan dress does neither the one nor the other. It causes inconvenience to the wearer, it does not cover the nudity of the offensive parts of his frame.

It is besides immensely calculated to keep alive amongst the people of the country the disastrous distinctions of caste, which is destructive to the national advancement, and which the advanced sons of the soil are making strenuous efforts to crush. That infantile habiliment should have been discarded with the deposition and removal of that wicked and turbulent man whose ancestors introduced into Ceylon.

Will the Govi Caste chiefs of the Kandyan Provinces tamely permit a Paduwa Caste man to don the costume of Kandyan gentry? The question is absurd and impertinent.

From time immemorial the people of the Visvakarma Caste have never had any restrictions placed against their wearing any dress they please. The distinguished Kandyan men of that class always wore the dress now donned by the Kandyan chiefs. Uduwala Gramabhojaka, Nilawala Gramabhojaka, Sittara Mohottala, who was made Dissawa of Puttalam are instances. For some time past there has been a growing tendency on the part of the Govi Caste chiefs of Kandy to monopolise this dress, which they have no right to wear. Even supposing they had a right to don it, it is not one which we would advise our countrymen to adopt as a national costume. It is an ancient habiliment adopted by those only who have very crude notions as to what a dress should be. It should be rejected as a cumbersome fantastic dress, insufficient to cover the nakedness of the human frame

The only dress which challenges respect to-day is the dress of the rulers of Ceylon. It is a dress which any man may wear without restriction. It stifles caste and compels respect to the wearer, be his caste what it may. Let us then discard those grotesque habiliments of infancy and breech ourselves in manhood.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### THE NOBLE OCCUPATION OF THE VISVAKARMANS.

That the hereditary occupation of the people of Visva-

karma Caste is a very honourable pursuit has received sufficient proof from the evidence afforded by the facts recounted in the foregoing pages, and that it has been recognised as such from ancient times by men of renown has received ample support from the same source.

Time was when the respect paid to the Visvakarman's art was at a discount. Happily for mankind that pestilential idea does not now trouble the minds of the Twentieth Century Govi, and that the pursuit of some of the mechanical arts of the Visvakarmans, by the Wellalars is a happy sign that the noble occupation is regaining its pristine honour.

In times gone by not only was the art of the Visvakarman held in great estimation, but the Visvakarman himself received the highest respect. It was in the time of war, specially that his importance was fully felt. The Philistines of old to prevent their enemies from providing themselves with weapons of war, took into custody all the smiths of Judea. Samuel laments that there was not a single artizan in the land of Israel. At a subsequent period, when the Babylonians captured Jerusalem, they took to their country as prisoners all the smiths in the holy city. The result was that the Babylonians obtained a very easy victory over the Israelites.

Nor was it in times of war only that the importance of the Visvakarman was fully recognised. Even in the halcyon days of peace it was fully appreciated. Solomon, the wise King of the Jews, employed artizans of every description, in the building of the temple at Jerusalem.\* of all these workmen none was more skilful than Hiram, king of Tyre. He was a Coppersmith of marvellous dexterity, and the lotus flowers he fashioned out of copper, to adorn the walls of the Temple, were of such exquisite finish, that to the naked

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\*The founder of Jerusalem was an Aryan King named Palua.

eye they presented all the graces of the natural flower. Solomon was so pleased with the work of Hiram, that at the banquet given to his workmen, the place of honour was accorded to the Coppersmith of Tyre, an honour paid more to his matchless skill as an Artizan than to his position as King.

During the time of the Saxons the Artizan had a very high position assigned to him. He took precedence even of the Doctor. In the palace of the King of Wales, he sat with the King and Queen at the same table, next to the spiritual adviser of the royal house-hold. (Public Opinion). This is strong evidence of the great esteem in which the artizan was held even among Royalty.

The occupation of the Artizan is one completely free from sin. In the pursuit of it no animal life is destroyed. The great Buddha on that account calls it Agaria Sippa "the exalted art." Different, however, is the estimation in which it was held for over a century by the Govi of Ceylon. With them it was quite an ignoble employment. With them to wield the hammer and to handle the file were contaminated, but to put on a crupper, to grip the mamotie, to wallow in the mud and till the soil were held a noble calling. The change which this opinion has undergone amongst the Govi is marvellous. What was for over hundred years regarded as a low occupation, is now esteemed a very honourable pursuit. Tardy has though this change been in coming, it has come at last, and Ceylon is the more fortunate for it. There are now amongst the Govi, Blacksmiths, Goldsmiths and Carpenters. They now pursue their occupation as a noble trade. Tilling is condemned for its inherent filthiness. No Govi youth, with the impress of European civilisation, now cares for the hereditary calling of his caste. He has taken to Visvakarman's art. What marvellous change of view? The caste, however, of which art is the inherited craft, is still held as low by the thoughtless men. This chimera we hope will also disappear before another decade is out, and the lofty caste to which the Visvakarman belongs will receive its due respect.

## CHAPTER XVII.

## VISVAKARMANS AS RECIPIENTS OF ROYAL HONOURS..

That the hereditary artisan is by birth a Brahmin has been, we presume, conclusively established by what has been mentioned in the early pages of this book. In any case that the caste of the Visvakarman is not an inferior caste is manifest from the manner in which they were treated by the Kings of Ceylon. The character of the gifts given to them by their rulers, the greatness of the ranks conferred on them, the great positions of trust held by them, the lofty and high-sounding names given to them, the liberty they have to wear any dress or ornament as they please, all these are circumstances that at once repel the insinuation that the Visvakarma Caste is a low caste. No testimony, however, conduces more to place this caste beyond all cavil and to flatter and exalt it into a position of the very highest rank amongst castes, than the fact that the men and women of the Govi caste were by the Kings of Ceylon given as servants to the people of the Visvakarma Caste.

No class of the people of Ceylon has been greater recipients of royal grants of lands than the Navandannos. So much was this the case, that the term "Gamlatradala," "Gamlatrala" or "Gamladda" which by a licence peculiar to the genius of the classical Sinhalese language, is contracted into "Galladda," is now exclusively applied to the Visvakarmans of the Kandyan Provinces as an honourable title. The meaning of the term is "the distinguished or noble man who has received a grant of lands from the King." It seems now that even this title of honour is in the sight of the Govi a reproach to the man who claims it. This is the palpable result of the workings of the Govi clans of Ceylon.

Of the large number of Sannasas granted to the Visvakarmans, the following are some of the most prominent. In 1708 Sri Wira Prakrama Bahu Narendra Sinha granted to

Ratnamudali Davunda\* Abharanachari of Kurukuttala in Yatinuwara, the fields called Kurukuttala, Elmalapata, Galpela, Heennarandeniya, Murutagahamulia, Liyannadeniya, and all the high lands and low lands and all angulu and dalupathas appertaining to his official post.

In 1644 Raja Sinha II granted the Mahagoda copper sannasa to Sandu Naide of Mahagoda. He was descended from a celebrated Visvakarman that came over to Ceylon from India in 1500 A. D., in the reign of Bhuvaneka Bahu VI of 'Cotta. As a mark of respect to the great Artizan the King sent Waduwawala Mulachari to meet Dewasinha Mulachari, with the King's own elephant to conduct the distinguished man to the palace. The Achari presented the King with a telescope and an hour-glass, and the King in his turn invested the Achari with the name Mandalawalli, and granted to him as a gift the village Mangalagama in Kinigoda in Four Korales. It is his family that some Gojama people of Mangalagama have to serve even now and recognise it as the lordly family of the village.

In 1763 Kirti Sri Raja Sinha, the second of the Tamil Kings of Ceylon, gave a copper sannasa to Wijayawardana Dewasinha Mulachari of Waduwawala in four Korales, with twelve amunams and five latas of high and low land.

In 1763 the same King gave another copper sannas to Rajakaruna Dewasurendra Manuwirawickrama Sirith Taralanna Arasarana Wichitrachitra Karamantanirmita Sakalasilpa Tilaka Navaratha Mudalidavunda Sippachari, and invested him with that sonorous and magnificent name. This is one of the two well-known sannases of Eldeniya. The lands granted were sixty amunams from Walwasagoda in Gampola, fifty amunams from Embekka in Udunuwara, and thirty amunams from Four Korales.

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\*Davunda indicates a title; to the possessor of it tom-tom beaters are given for the purpose of discoursing sweet music at his residence morning and evening.

In 1772 the same Sovereign granted the other copper sannasa of Eledeniya to Rajakaruna Manuwirawickrama Arasarana Navaratna Mudalidavunda Sippachari. The well-known book, Eledenialankara was composed by a contemporary poet to celebrate the event.

In 1786 Rajadhi Raja Sinha gave another sannas to Sri Dantadhatu Makaraddhwaja Prakrama Arasarana Savuttari Swarnatilaka Navaratna Mudalidavunda Abharanachari. The grant was for a large extent of land from Walwasagoda in Gampola.

In 1790 yet another distinguished Visvakarman of Eledeniya was the recipient from the same King of another grant of lands with the following name:—Rajakaruna Dewasurendra Manuwirawickrama Sieith Taralna Arasarana Karmantanirmita Sokalasilpa Tilaka Navaratna Mudalidavunda Sippachari. The presents given were a powerful young elephant and some lands from Kotmale and Kurukuttala.

The King Wickrama Bahu was crowned by the distinguished Visvakarman named Pandita Nilame. On that occasion his daughter and mother were both honoured by the King, by the names Punsandahamy and Wijayawardana respectively. To this were added a she-elephant, a curtain, a slave girl to sweep the house and a jacket called Bopatahotte.

In 1279, at the invitation of the King Pandita Prakrama Bahu, there came over to Ceylon from Kimbulwapura in India a most distinguished Achari. He completed the temple at Munneswarama. For this the king named him "Mutugala Rajakarunadi Wirawardana Viskamnandana Achari." In addition to this he received from the king a she-elephant called Punchi Kalu, four men and women as slaves, and the village fort called Karaulla named after the impalement of three Tamil Karawa men who destroyed the curtains of the Munneswaram Temple.

In 1640, Sinha Narayana was similarly honoured. The gratified monarch presented him with thirty amunams of paddy fields from Kasatapitiya in Helauda Pattu of Meda Korale, Suffragam.

Rajapaksa Bhagottara Sittara Mohottala of Hulangomuwa was another most celebrated Visvakarman. He was the Admirable Crichton of the reign of his King. A wizard of immense learning of a very abstruse complexion, a learning which, in mediaeval Christendom, would have made him acquire a speedy acquaintance with the sweets of the Auto Da Fe, he held eighteen posts of great trust. He was the Dissawa of Rusigama, Yodagama, Anawulundana, Munneswarama and Puttalam. He was also the Lekama of Halumandape, and he had the military rank of Muhandiram. The sannas granted to him is inscribed in the famous slab called "Sannas Kanda" in Hulangomuwa in Matale. His residence is still called Walauwa. The reasons of this great honour had root in the following circumstance. The king desirous of building a new city wished to know from the Mohottala a suitable site for it. He recommended that on which the town of Kandy now stands. When he was asked to state the reason why he favoured that spot more than any other, "because" said the intrepid old man, "it rests on a white tortoise." The royal curiosity was instantly kindled by this audacious declaration of the scientific man. The King ordered him to show the reptile, with the significant hint that his failure would make the pit, excavated unearthen the crustacean, his last resting place. The undaunted Mohottala ordering the servants to dig the earth until they reached to a stratum of white clay, retired to rest. The servants carried out the instructions, and when they approached the white earth, they informed the Mohottala of the fact. The King was sent for, and when he arrived the servants began to cut the earth, when lo! and behold! a white tortoise rising to the surface, swam thrice round and disappeared below. The astrologer addressed the astonished monarch and requested him to carry out the royal threat by giving him whatever he pleased. The overjoyed King in addition to the posts of trust already mentioned

presented him with a powerful elephant, the inscription graven on whose tusks bears up to this day incontrovertible proof of the incident. His Jagalat Toppee is now in the possession of his heirs.

The title with which the King Raja Sinha II in 1566 invested Kumburegedara Mulachari of Ullandupitiya in Harispattu is "Rajakaruna Dewanarayana Bodhipaksa Vichitrachitra Sridantadhatu Makaraddhwaja Buwanekabahu Abhisheka Danta Sinha Panditaratne Mahanama Mulachari."

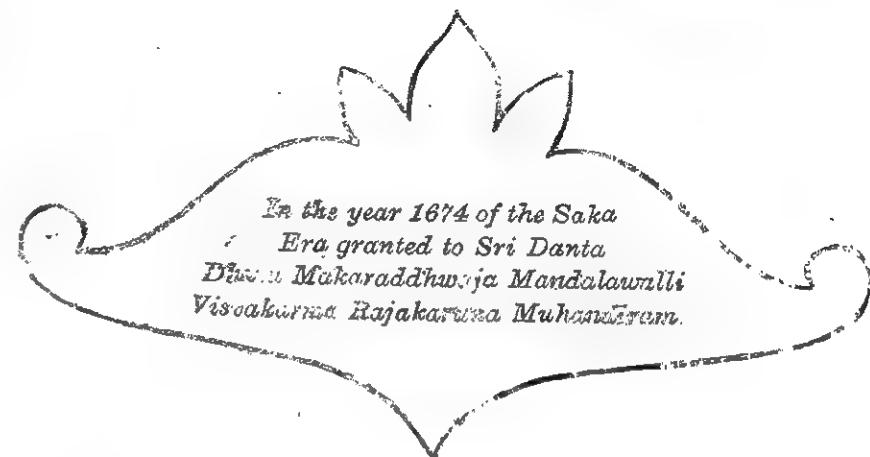
Equally granted and euphonious is the name given to Godapola Gamladda by the King Bhuvaneka Bahu of Cotta. It runs thus: "Wijayasingha Sridantadhatu Makaraddhwaja Bhuvaneka Bahu Manikarma Swarnakaramatilaka Patasavuttari Mudalidavunda Navaratayanayalli Abharanachari."

The name of Sittara Mulachari of Deldeniya is "Bhuvaneka Bahu Puspadeva Narayana Abhisheka Vichitrachitra Silpachari."

During the later Sinhalese kings Dewanarayana Achari was Korala of Morowak Korale. He administered the entirety of that district. He had a whole village given to him as a Nindagama from the Matara District. He was the proud possessor of the unique flag called the "Hanumanta Kodiya," reputed to have been given by Hanuma to Visvakarmaya. It was a gift for withholding his hand for five minutes from smothering the flames of the conflagration caused by that terrible and hideous deity of the Hindoo Mythology. This flag was afterwards found in the possession of Antonio Rabel, the Adigar of Matara. On important occasions such as marriages and funerals the Visvakarmans carry this flag as a mark of honour.

Of the recipients of Gold Fillets may be mentioned the names of Dewendra Mulaachari, Mangalagama Badal Naide, Eldeniya Achari and Bellana Mestri. The following is a facsimile on a reduced scale of

#### THE GOLD FILLET GRANTED TO BELLANA MESTRI



#### CHAPTER XXVIII.

##### TITLES OF HONOUR, POSTS OF TRUST AND ROYAL GIFTS DURING THE SINHALESE SWAY.

During the Sinhalese sway of the Island distinctions of caste were strongly marked and rigorously observed. Titles of honour and posts of trust were conferred on men of high castes only. And it was during the reign of these stern conservative Kings that the people of the Visvakarma Caste, won from them their grand titles important posts and valuable gifts of lands and slaves mentioned above. And those potentates, Kings and Princes, in granting these posts and titles simply obeyed the precepts of the Sastras of old. We quote a few of them from Vyjayanta.

"Atahatah Acharya danam vakshyamah."

"We shall hereafter mention the things which should be given to the Achari."

"Puraprasada maulincha sarva bhusayudhan tatha,  
"Mangalan sarva bhogyantha katrunam dana muchyate."

"The city, the fort, the crown and jewellery and all weapons of offence and defence, and all utensils, to those who made and beautified these everything should be given as they wish."

"Nagarancha sadrisan bhavanam  
"Vesniamatra pradēhakam  
"Kiritan chōktan sirsam  
"Panchāngam panchabhāndakam."  
"Etatsarva bhōgyantra  
"Kirita muttaman tathā  
"Sustamāchāryan tōsan  
"Sarvavurdhi karam nrupam."

"To the King his city is his palace, his palace is to him his hand, his crown is to him his head, and the royal ornaments are those that adorn the hands, the feet, and the wrist, and they are the sword, the umbrella, the tiara, the sandals and the fan. All these should be given."

"In importance the crown is superior to everything else, and prosperity and abundance attend the King who pleases the Achari that made the crown."

"Sthapatimāchārya sarvakriyākārasya silpibhīh  
"Yatrayatrāhyā santushtan yadassarvārtha nāsanam."

"The chief Achari the Achari, the Silpi that accomplished everything should one of these be displeased, adversity and ruin would be the King's lot."

"Hastiasva rathachchatra dola rājādhi vāhanan  
"Sankhakāhala vāryantha dāsadāsicha dānakah."

"Elephants, horses, chariots, umbrellas, royal palankeens, the blowing of conchs and boys and girls all these should be given."

"Kankananpāda bhūsancha swarna yajnopavīnakam  
"Harakundalamālācha bālapattancha mudrikam."

"Ornaments for the hands and feet, pearls, earring necklaces and rings, these should be given."

"Sarvabhūsana Rathnancha vastrādīdhana dhānyapi  
"Grāmādikshētra bhūmincha gōmahisādipälakah."

"All ornaments, all precious stones and all dress wealth and corn, fields and cattle servants to take care them, these 'should be given.'

"Mātrumagra mahēsincha maulimāchārgya kan  
tathā,  
"Purōbitan silpa māchārgyan avadyāpancha tāih  
nrupaih."

"The King's mother, his Queen, the Achari that fashioned the crown, the King's prime minister, and the Achari that made his ornaments should never by him despised."

"Maulimāchārgyan kartru jeevitāṅga dhanak-  
shyam,  
"Yajamānascha kṛitan yatra sarva bhögāyun-  
asyati."

"Destruction to the life or limb or to the property the Achari that made the crown or injury to his reputation and evil will overtake the prosperity of him who caused it."

"Yatyat santustādāchārgyan tat tat swāmi phalan  
dadet,  
"Dadāti nrupa pakshancha abhivurdhikaran  
sadā."

"To what extent the King pleases the Achari, that extent thrives the King's own prosperity."

ta vive kr. ac t'rgyan ampa s  
 ta vīlā tā m. idyāt kūnāgākā  
 vidhāit."

"The Achari that made and beautified all these things is an offspring of Brahmaya. He performs all sacrificial rights, according to the Vedas."

What man of sense could now possibly fail to perceive from the facts narrated in the foregoing pages, the lofty regard paid to the Visvakarmans by Kings of old! An impartial and unprejudiced observation will doubtless bring home to everyone the conviction, not only that the people of the Visvakarma Caste are not Sudras, but that, on the contrary, if we are to rely upon the authorities cited above, they are the most nobly descended human beings on the face of this terrestrial globe.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### MAHA MUDALYAR RABEL.

Let us lastly see what regard the Governors of this Island have paid the Visvakarmans since its conquest by the Europeans.

During the Dutch administration of Ceylon there lived in the Fort at Matara, a brave Sinhalese man, the like of whom Ceylon has not produced since. We mean Don Antonio Rabel Wijendra Wijayasingha. He was a man of the Visvakarma Caste. The book called "Rabel Warnanawa," a poem composed by the poet Kavisekara Malawara, a contemporary of Rabel, to commemorate the occasion of the latter's investiture with the rank of Maha Mudaliyar, a poem of which the beauty will well compare with most other productions of a similar nature, traces his origin to Manu, the King Mahasammata of a later date. Manu was the eldest son of Visvakarmaya, who was worshipped as a

God, and who was the progenitor of the Visvakarma Caste. It is to this great Manu, who was a Blacksmith both by caste and trade, that the three illustrious lines of kings—the Solar, the Chola, and the Chalukya trace their descent, and from the first of these arose the renowned Prince Siddharta, who afterwards attained Buddhahood.

In the eighth century of the Christian era, the King Dapulu Sen built the great temple at Devinuwara, Dondra of the present day, a temple consecrated to hold the red sandal wood image of Vishnu. For the purpose of constructing that holy edifice, he brought from India to Ceylon a number of dexterous artizans of the Tarachcha or Visvakarma Caste, who settled down in the colony of Marapaluwa. Of these workmen none was more celebrated than Ulakamata, and from him Antonio Rabel was directly descended.

On the 23rd April, 1661, Rabel was created Maha Mudaliyar. In addition to this he was Adigar of Matara, Mudaliyar of the Giruwadolosdas Korale, Ethbandane or Kuruwe Mudaliyar, Chief of the Grain Tax Department, and one of the members of the Landraad or the Executive Council, both at Matara and Colombo. That poem says, and Baldeus, the historian confirms it, that at the investiture of Rabel with the rank of Maha Mudaliyar, all the prisoners, even those in the dungeons of a felon's goal, were set at liberty, as a mark of respect for the great man. He was, moreover, a Commander of the Dutch Forces of Ceylon. He on more than one occasion encountered the troops of the Sinhalese King of Cotta, and defeated them. Baldeus mentions one instance on page 702.

"Rabel, a brave Sinhalese man in our service, a native of Matara, went out of Hakmana. His body-guard on the occasion consisted of ten European soldiers, fifteen Lascoreen guards, a serjeant and several others. The Commander of the Sinhalese forces, apprised of Rabel's absence from the Fort, sent a detachment of one hundred men to take that stronghold by assault. Having received informa-

tion of the occurrence. Rabel immediately returned, and undaunted by the numerical superiority of the enemy, fell upon them and inflicted on them such a severe defeat that they fled in utter confusion and disorder." The Sinhalese King was so much struck by the intrepidity of Rabel, that far from resenting the humiliating incident, contracted so great a friendship and so lofty an admiration for the heroic man, that he sent him as presents flags, a garland of gold a pair of jewelled sandals and a sword.

The Sinhalese King well knew who Rabel was, at the time he paid that doughty warrior, that great mark of respect. Even the presents were such as only men of high castes could ever hope to receive from the royal hands of a Sinhalese King. Rabel's caste entitled him to such gifts.

Of all the Maha Mudaliyars created by the Dutch Administrators of Ceylon, Anthonio Rabel was the first, and far and away the most illustrious. He was a brave warrior, for the protection of whose person Government had assigned a body-guard of European and Sinhalese soldiers, a signal mark of respect offered to men of eminence only, a mark of respect the like of which has not been shown to any other Sinhalese man since.

In 1661, His Excellency the Admiral Ryckloff van Goens, Governor of Ceylon, in recognition of Rabel's signal service to the Republic, awarded him a medal of gold, the first given to any man by the Dutch Government of Ceylon. This medal is still in existence, and is now in the possession of one of Rabel's descendants at Matara. In his Notes on a Dutch Medal appearing in Journal No. 54, Volume xviii, 1903, of the Royal Asiatic Society, Ceylon Branch. Mr. Paul Pieris has fallen into the egregious blunder of mistaking Sabe for Rabel by describing him as a man of Belideniya, who supported him'self "by making fish-hooks which he sold to the fishermen along the coast." All the incidents narrated by Mr. Pieris appertain to the life of Sabe of Belideniya at Babarenda and not to that of Rabel, the opulence of whose parents placed the son's mak-

ing and selling bill-hooks for the common sustenance of life far beyond the domain of necessity. Of this great man Anthonio Rabel, Valentine, the historian, has written much in Dutch. It would be out of place here to recount all his exploits, but the little we have given is enough to convey an adequate idea of the character and lustre of this Sinhalese hero. Anthonio Rabel was in the same year created Adigar of Matara, a title by which he was commonly known ever since.

The Colombo Landraad Council, of which Rabel was a member, and of which mention was made in previous pages consisted of the following gentlemen :—

1. Pierre Dupont, the Dissawa,
2. Andre Verlose, the Lieutenant Dissawa,
3. The Captain of Pasdum Corale,
4. Don Juan de Costa Modliyar,
5. The Adigar of Matara (Anthonio Rabel),
6. Salvay Pandar Modliyar, and
7. The President of Negombo.

The Matara Landraad consisted only of five members. Their names are as follows :—

1. The Lieutenant Herman Wynantsz, Captain of Galle,
2. Hans Jacob Boes, Ensign and Overseer of the Elephants in Matara,
3. The Captain of the Cinnamon Department, Ensign Joan Base,
4. Don Juan de Costa, Rajapaksa Modliyar and
5. The Adigar of Matara, Mr. Anthonio Rabel.

No Sinhalese man has since the conquest of this Island of ours by the Europeans been more illustrious than Anthonio Rabel and none wielded more power. The Goi Mudaliyars of the latter day pale into insignificance by the side of this great nobleman. So much was he respected, so

great was the power he wielded, that he was looked upon as a second Governor of the Dutch Provinces of Ceylon. He had the power to sentence a man even to death.

He was esteemed by all alike. His public spirit and munificence were unparalleled in Ceylon. The tanks he constructed, the roads he opened, the orchards he planted, all for the benefit of his countrymen, up to this day bear irrefragable testimony to his greatness and generosity. He was the most illustrious Sinhalese man of his time, and none has appeared since to equal him and none to surpass him.

We have said in a previous page that this great man Rabel traced his descent, through Ulakamata the great architect, to Manu. We have also mentioned the fact that all the Kings of Ceylon from Wijayo to Mahasen claimed direct descent from the same source. This is the caste which the Goi and some other castes of Ceylon attempt to deride. If it is a shame to belong to such a caste, or to be descended from such a source, it is a shame of which no honest man need be ashamed. Don Anthonio Rabel was a member of the Visvakarma Caste. He was therefore a Brahmin (vide Twashtra Chrita and Sankara Vijaya).

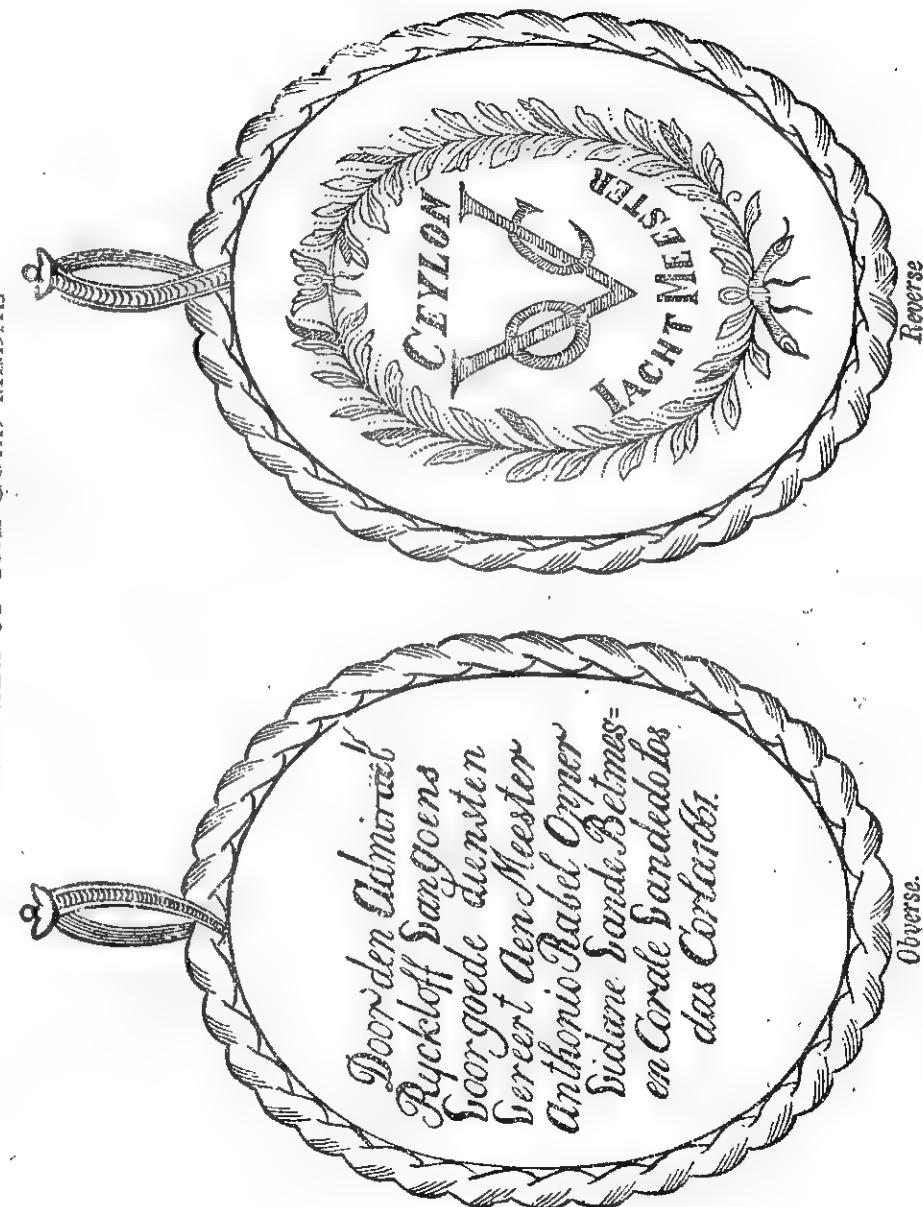
The inscription on the Obverse is as follows :—

DOOR DEN ADMIRAEL  
RYCKLOFF VAN GOENS  
VOOR GOEDE DIENSTEN  
VEREERT AEN MEESTER  
ANTHONIO RABEL OPPER  
VIDANE VAN DE RETMES  
EN CORALE VAN DE DOLOS  
DAS CORLA 1661.

The following is a translation of the text :—

Awarded in 1661 by the Admiral Ryckloff van Goens to Mr. Anthonio Rabel, Upper Vidane of the Betmas and Korala of the Dolosdas Korale for his good services.

A FACSIMILE OF THE GOLD MEDAL



On the reverse is a wreath with the inscription :

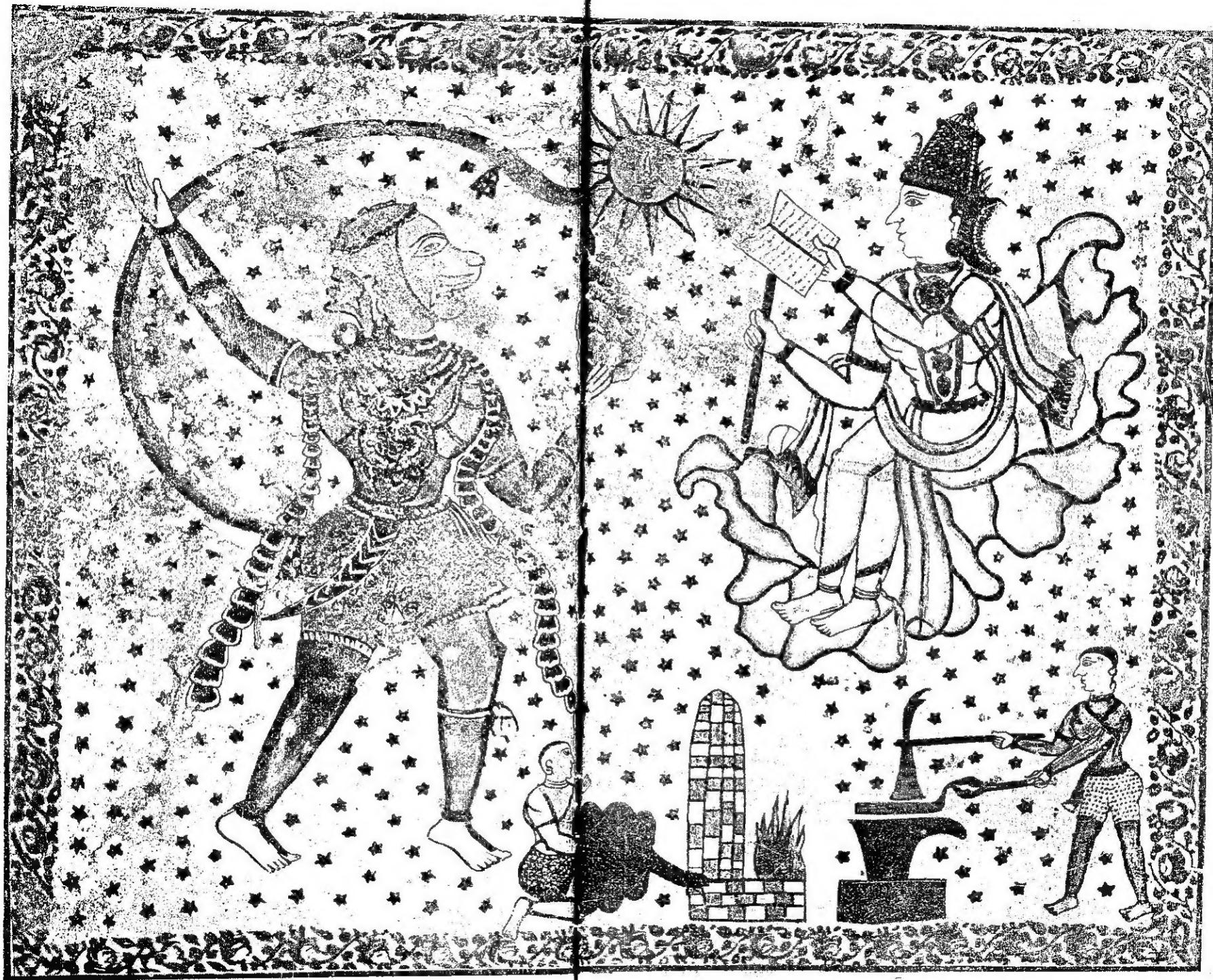
CEYLON



IACHT MEESTER

Iacht Meester or Jaagmeester means MASTER OF THE HUNT, and Anthonio Rabel was the first MASTER OF THE HUNT.

The inscription on the medal setting forth that it was presented in 1661 to Anthonio Rabel Chief Vidane of the Betmas and Dolosdas Korale, calls forth ex facie some explanation. On the receipt of the intelligence towards the close of the year 1559 of Rabel's victories at Hakmana, Nalagama and Dunumuna, His Excellency Ryckloff Van Goens despatched orders to Holland for the medal. The long voyage via the Cape occupied then a period of about three months and a half; and a period of about eight months must be allowed for the inevitable delay at the offices of the Netherland East India Company and of the "College of Seventeen Directors" and the time taken in making the medal. The medal was completed about the beginning of January, 1661, and the engravers have obviously inscribed thereon the year of completion. The Presentation of the medal having taken place on the 23rd April, 1661, it is clear that the authorities in Holland lost no time in forwarding the medal to Ceylon on its completion. It is interesting to note that His Excellency Ryckloff Van Goens in his instructions to Governor Adrian Van der Meyden dated the 21st June, 1661, makes reference to the illustrious warrior as "the Adigar of Matara Mr. Anthonio Rabel." In these circumstances it is clear beyond all manner of doubt that Anthonio Rabel was the recipient of the gubernatorial honours above referred to on the occasion of the presenta-



tion of the medal as described in Rabel Warnanawa.

What, however, was the respect paid to this illustrious man by a certain young Sinhalese Civil Servant of the Goi-caste of Ceyon ! In speaking of Rabel's medal, this young servant of the Crown sneered at Rabel's caste. What a mistake ! The literature which relates to caste is an extensive one. It is only a fortunate few that have the time and inclination to study that somewhat abstruse subject, and amongst those fortunate few, men of Western culture do not generally take rank. We doubt very much that the young Civil Servant who attempted to disparage Rabel's caste, knows aught of that subject himself, for had he known it, he would have discreetly refrained from flouting the caste of Rabel, when his own caste, which he in his youthful innocence thinks is a high caste, is so vulnerable. Education is the only panacea to cure these ills.

### CHAPTER XXX.

#### HOW EUROPEANS ARE MISLED BY THE GOVI.

The Goigama people of Ceylon have contracted the baneful habit and practice of running down other castes just as if their own caste would bear examination. It is but a very foolish practice fraught with peril to their own caste, which cannot possibly stand the test of any searching scrutiny. The apparent indifference evinced by other castes to such provoking disparagements, earned for the disparagers a perfect sabbath from adverse critics and a complete impunity from deserved castigation. That indifference has now given place to open vindication and active resistance. The Visvabrahmins, or the Visvakarmans of Ceylon have felt it their bounden duty to thresh out the subject of caste, and place the truth concerning it before the public, and to this end they have banded together.

We return to our main subject. In the early part of the English rule, the people of the Visvakarma Caste held some

of the most important posts of trust under the Crown. During the administration of Lord Torrington, Niyaraypola Gramabhojaka was made Mudaliyar of Matale District. The post of Gramabhojaka under the Sinhalese Kings was a very important one. That of an upcountry Ratemahathmaya of the present day hardly reflects a tithe of the weight attached to the post of a Gramabhojaka.

The times are now completely changed. The machinations of the Goi people have deceived the English administrators to confine some appointments exclusively to the people of that caste, to the exclusion of the Visvakarmans, who from time immemorial have been held as perfectly worthy to fill any post of trust and honour in the Island. Such cannot be predicated concerning the Govi caste people of Ceylon, for the great King Nissankamalla promulgated an edict and to communicate to it permanency had it graven on a stone slab, that a Govi caste man should never be given a post of trust in the State. It were better if now and then our rulers took a lesson from that royal decree.

We have now in Ceylon, a country subject to the British Rule, a department, the minor posts of which are exclusively confined to the sons of the Goi. How such a rule, which is calculated to render British justice a perfect mockery, could have seen the light of day, in a department directed by an Englishman, it is difficult to comprehend. That the birth of this rule has root in the womb of some Goi machination there cannot be any doubt whatever. We are obsessed with the fear that it is the spurious offset of the hallucination that the Govi caste is the highest in Ceylon. The sooner this heresy is autodafeed, the better for the people of Ceylon. But the wonder is that this obnoxious rule does still exist. What a spring it is to the internal commotion of a country! What a blow to the People's welfare and aspirations! It is exactly calculated to create jealousy and enmity amongst the several castes of the Island. Here is an open invasion of the natural rights of the people. The fault lies not so much on the head of that department that enforced the rule as on those who contrived to have it passed.

Surely it does not require much political sagacity to perceive that the violation of the natural rights of one section of a nation is disastrous to its progress as a whole. When will our countrymen learn the political lesson that to sacrifice the rights of the nation as a whole is to forfeit their own?

### CHAPTER XXXI.

#### CASTE AN APPALLING BANE.

To resume our narrative, the Aryans, if not all mankind, were of equal grade by birth. In course of time, however, their conduct effected a difference, and a division of them into four classes—the Brahmins, the Kshtriya, the Vaisya and the Sudra followed. Of these four the first three took precedence of the fourth, the first and second of the third, and the first of the second. Even amongst the first three, as amongst the Sudras, there was a mixture of good and bad. The first three were not all radically good, nor were those of the fourth inherently wicked. Conduct alone does the work of selection. The superiority of one caste over another is based upon an idea false at the root. That one man is superior to another is a proposition that can safely be granted, but that one caste is superior to another is one that baffles apprehension, and is false at the base.

Caste is an evil charged with peril to all unity and concerted action. It is an unmixed curse fraught with untold woes to you my countrymen and to your country. Forty years ago no nation in the world was more conservative, more addicted to the observance of caste than Japan. As long as they were ruled by that institution, they were somewhere at the bottom of the scale of independent nations, but one combined resolution expelled the monster caste and the result is seen to-day written in blazoned characters. Caste is an institution mean and meaningless, base and baseless. We all belong to one race, the Sinhalese, once so glorious in the annals of history, but alas now so low! See how disunited we are. That disunion, that refusal to blend, that

reluctance to act in concert for our own benefit are but the glaring and palpable outcome of this appalling bane-caste. Shall we continue it, or shall we take the example set to us by Japan and ourselves crush this evil, which has extinguished brotherly affection, annihilated civil rights and created an almost insurmountable barrier against unity, amity and progress? It is for you to answer that question plainly and promptly, and on that answer depend your political preservation and national regeneration.

THE END.